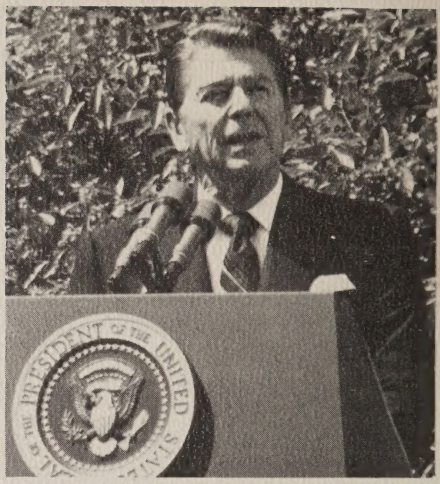
VOLUME 33 / NUMBER 6 JUNE 1982

FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER



"THE RIGHT TO PRAY"

On May 6, President Reagan proposed a constitutional amendment which would permit voluntary prayer in public schools. Following are excerpts of what he had to say.

"I said before that the most sublime picture in American history is of George Washington on his knee in the snow at Valley Forge. That image personifies a people who know that it's not enough to depend on our own courage and goodness. We must also seek help from God, our father and preserver.

"Abraham Lincoln said once that he would be the most foolish man on this footstool we call earth if he thought for one minute he could fulfill the duties that faced him if he did not have the help of one who is wiser than all the others . . . .

"One of my favorite passages in the Bible is the promise God gives us in Second Chronicles: If my people which are called by my name shall humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land.

"That promise is the hope of America and all our people. Because of my faith in that promise I'm particularly pleased to be able to tell you today that this Administration will soon submit to the United States Congress a proposal to amend our Constitution to allow our children to pray in school.

"No one must ever be forced or coerced or pressured to take part in any religious exercise. But neither should the Government forbid religious practice.

"The amendment we'll propose will restore the right to pray."

The Editor invites your opinion of the President's proposal, whether pro or con. Address: Fellowship in Prayer, 20 Nassau St, Princeton, NJ 08540.

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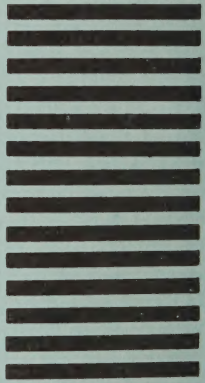

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Cover photo by Amy Stromsten shows a teenager who, like many of her peers, is dealing with a brand-new set of problems in today's world.

2 **Powerlessness in Shin Buddhism** by Paul Walsh
9 **The Intuitive Experience** by Eugene Raudsepp
14 **A Guide to Gurdjieff** by Amy Stromsten
18 **Jean de La Fontaine: The Parnassian Butterfly** by J.S.D. Glaus
22 **On Desire and Contentment** by Brad Hill
25 **Solitude** by Doris Donnelly
32 **Prayer** by Carmelita McKeever
34 **Emil Nolde** by J.S.D. Glaus
36 **Between Mozart and Left Field** by Tom Baker
38 **Van's Shop** by Elizabeth Socolow
42 **Teenagers** a photo-essay by Amy Stromsten
46 **The Working Couple** by Leon Gersten
51 **Doorway to Nowhere** a poem by Renee Martin
64 **Meditation:** On Hatred by Benjamin Constant

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Powerlessness in Shin Buddhism

by PAUL WALSH

WHAT KIND OF PERSON is most likely to be attracted to the Tariki (other-power) teaching of Shin Buddhism, as against, for example, Zen Buddhism? In 1182 or 1982, two possibilities suggest themselves: 1) People who, for whatever reason, find the practice of Jiriki (self-power) physically, intellectually, or spiritually too demanding a path to enlightenment. 2) People whose experience of their own weakness has been such as to bring them to the brink of despair and convince them that they are powerless to save themselves from themselves by their own efforts.

Tariki is particularly appropriate for those who have a strong existential appreciation of their powerlessness over their own anger, greed, or folly. Such people have struggled for years without success to rid themselves of their shortcomings. "A resolution of this seemingly hopeless impasse eventually occurs," a modern Jungian analyst puts it, "by virtue of the awareness that the ego's claim of a capacity to control rests on an illusion. Without the actual experience of this sort of impasse, the ego cannot renounce its claim to the central position. It is only when we have come to our wits' end, and this in the face of the most sincere and extreme efforts, only when we realize that we are hopelessly incapable of changing ourselves, that we can begin to accept our real existential position in the life drama. When we are able to say, 'This is I, this is my being, and nothing can save me from or free me from being this sort of person,' we have come to a point of acceptance that initiates a fundamental transformation of which we are the object, not the subject."

The acceptance and admission of our own powerlessness is what makes possible the working in us of another, higher power that can transform and save (enlighten) us. Such other-power is Amida Buddha — the central figure of Shin Buddhism.

The Essentials

The Shin ("true") teaching of the Jodo ("Pure Land") School of Mahayana Buddhism is based on the original vow of Amida, the Buddha of Infinite Light and Eternal Life.

Amida's forty-eight vows — made when he was the bodhisattva Hozo — are expressions of his great compassion for all sentient beings. Essentially they promise that anyone who expresses absolute faith in Amida and his vow will be born into his Pure Land of Bliss, there to attain perfect enlightenment. This faith is not acquired through one's own efforts (self-power). It is awakened in one's heart on hearing the Name of Amida. This, in turn, happens when one finally surrenders, gives up all self-power efforts, and is thereby enabled to

Amida, The Lord of Infinite Light is usually accompanied by the two bodhisattvas Avalokitesvara and Mahasthamaprapta. The wood-dry lacquer trinity **(above)** *is in the eastern section of the Horyu-ji, Japan's premier Buddhist temple, founded by Prince Shotoku in the year 607. Like all important temples of early Japan, Horyu-ji was the center in its neighborhood for education, charity, as well as religious rites and ceremonies. (From* **HORYU-JI: TEMPLE OF THE EXALTED LAW, Early Buddhist Art From Japan,** *by Kurata Bunsaku, Japan Society, 333 East 47 Street, New York, N.Y. 10017).*

hear that still, small voice resonating in the core of his being.

From that moment of surrender and acceptance, the believer's entrance into the Pure Land, subsequent enlightenment, and return to this *shaba* world as a bodhisattva are assured. The practice of *nembutsu*, or *shomyo*, (actually "thinking of the Buddha") serves as an expression of gratitude and joy.

The Tariki teaching of Shin promises that rebirth in the Pure Land is assured, no matter what one does or fails to do, by Amida's original vow. This vow was that his Name should be heard by all sentient beings throughout the universe so that they might be assured of enlightenment in and through him. To hear and pronounce his Name is the one right act that will guarantee rebirth in the Pure Land. D.T. Suzuki describes the mysterious power of the Name in this way: "To know the name of an object is the same as naming an object and bringing it into existence. Naming in a sense is creating, and creation is the most wonderful event and a mysterious power. When Amida willed to have his Name fill the world, his idea was to rouse his own image in the heart of every being. When this individual Amida devotee responds to the call of Amida who is the Buddha of Infinite Light and Eternal Life, his faith is confirmed and the assurance of rebirth in Amida's Land is attained. This is deep calling unto deep. Although orthodox Shin followers do not like this way of expressing the idea, the truth when it is logically presented ultimately comes to it. Amida's Name is heard because the devotee has something to respond to it, and this something must be of the order as Amida himself, otherwise there cannot be any response in any sense. . . . Faith which is the assurance of rebirth comes into being only when this echoing is mutual between Amida and his devotee. To be more exact, the pronouncing of the Name is possible only when the devotee's own inner Amida, so to speak, is awakened from the darkness of ignorance, or, we might say, released from the bondage of karma."

The Experience of Failure of Self-Power

However it may be with the ordinary man or woman, Shinran himself certainly was not moved to reject and root out all traces of Jiriki in himself and his teaching because of any failure of intellect or inability to carry out rigorous exercise. Rather, it was his experience of his own ineradicably sinful nature and his lack of progress in purifying it through self-power that prompted him to turn to Tariki. Like Paul, he might well have said, "For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do."

However difficult or painful the path that leads finally to the giving up of one's self-power, such an experience of failure is deemed necessary if one is to come to the real source of all power. This power emanates from — indeed, *is* — Amida; and his abode is deep within each of us. In Jungian terms, Amida is the Self, the center of the psyche, as distinct from the self, which is merely the center of consciousness.

To penetrate into the Self requires surrender of self and help from a higher power. However, this surrender is unlikely to take place until self-power has exhausted itself. As Suzuki points out, "Intellectual speculation is a form of self-power, so is moral discipline, and as such they are not conducive

to the realization of the other-power. But as the other-power is at the infinite end of those human calculations born of self-power, the self-power is to be severely tried until it finds itself entirely wanting. It is not in the nature of self-power to be despaired of its own limitations without first putting itself to trial. Mere reasoning or persuasion is not sufficient. The self-power — a most aggressive, most conceited power — will never be convinced of its impotency until it has exercised itself to its utmost and acknowledged its defeat. Frequently it so happens that the self-power refuses to push its efforts to the limits where it is forced to admit its powerlessness, for the self-power from its own baseness hesitates, falters, swerves, intoxicated with human conceit and deep-seated delusion. The awakening of the enlightenment-mind is just the beginning of the self-power coming to knowledge of itself. It is just an incipient stage of self-realization. One has to go through with bitter frustrations one after another, otherwise the self-power can never see itself totally bared before the other-power. But, in reality, that the self-power can bare itself shorn of all self-conceit and self-delusion is due to the presence of the other-power within itself. In other words, it is the working of the power of the Original Vow in our relative consciousness that the self-power finally comes to acknowledge its complete defeat."

Avoiding Spiritual Materialism

After the conversion experience of illumination by the Light of Amida, how does the devotee maintain his spiritual equilibrium? As Chogyam Trungpa points out, "The problem is that ego can convert anything to its own use, even spirituality. Ego is constantly attempting to acquire and apply the teachings of spirituality for its own benefit." The problem then becomes one of maintaining the "new man's" hard-earned humility, and Shinran's teaching contains two antidotes for the dangers of ego-inflation.

In the first place, he taught that, unlike Zen, Shin Buddhists could not possess the adamantine nature of a Buddha in this lifetime. Such a transcendent nature is above good and evil and impervious to sin — a dangerous and antimonian doctrine. One becomes a bodhisattva only *after* birth in the Pure Land, not before. While in this karmic-ridden world of anger, greed, and folly, the devotee continues to need all the help he can get, and is in no position to help others. He may be saved and his birth in the Pure Land assured, but he must keep in mind always that this is only through the grace of Amida. It is not the result of his own virtue.

Gratitude

The second antidote against the poison of ego-inflation is gratitude. As long as one remembers where he has come from, and remembers that it is only through the vow of Amida that he is saved, he will continue to be inspired to call aloud the Name in gratitude. As Meister Eckhart said, "God must be brought to birth in the soul again and again." Gratitude nourishes faith, and it is this deep trust in Amida's vow — not the mere practice of repetition *per se* — which is the cause of birth in the Pure Land.

Gratitude, therefore, becomes a central function of the religious life and practice of Shin. One is never further from sin than when one is truly grateful, and all of one's thoughts, words, and deeds are offered in repayment of one's obligation to the Buddha.

Gratitude, moreover, is not dependent on a life free of anger, greed, and folly and the feelings of pain and shame that go with life on this earth. With all their character defects weighing heavily on them, Shin believers feel yet more strongly the presence in themselves of Amida. They are ashamed of their limitations and sins of omission and commission, but they are grateful for the other-power and filled with joy and happiness since they are assured of salvation. Sorrow and joy, regret and serenity, shame and exaltation commingle in them and will continue to do so until they are reborn in the Pure Land. Gratitude flourishes in the midst of misery, for misery reminds us of our powerlessness and helps prevent the resurrection of Jiriki. When things go too well, internally or externally, it is all too easy for the ego to believe its own power is responsible. Gratitude gives credit where it is due.

The poetry of Saichi Asahara, a *myokonin* (a devotee of Shin) of modern Japan, who died in 1933, reflects both the joy and wretchedness, the sorrow and gratitude that keep the faithful from falling back into the trap of egocentricity:

> *Say, Saichi, joy is not to be trusted,*
> *Vanishing, it flies away;*
> *That which flies not is mercy, Oya-sama's mercy.*
> *Captured by* Namu-amida-butsu,
> *Saichi is thereby saved, heart and all.*
> *How grateful he feels!* Namu-amida-butsu.
> . . . .
> *Saichi is the happiest man this time:*
> *Evils are taken away,*
> *The self-power is taken away,*
> *Doubt is taken away,*
> *All is taken away,*
> *Saichi's entire possessions are taken away;*
> *While* Namu-amida-butsu *has been given quite gratuitously,*
> *And thereby he is free from worries.*
> *All that is now left to him is to be reborn in the Pure Land.*

The Rewards of Powerlessness

Amida himself, of course, is completely akarmic. Karma and its workings have nothing to do with him one way or the other. He stands above karma, waiting to welcome all sentient beings, good and bad alike, to his Land of Pure Bliss. Their "sins" are left behind, where they belong, in the *shaba* world of good and bad, happiness and sorrow. In that world, however, despite one's conversion and acceptance by Amida, karma and its results still prevail.

Now, however, the devotee is able to ignore his burdens, no matter how

heavy. Shinran says, "While my body is in the world of karma, my mind is in the Pure Land of Amida." He is like a man who has slowly and painfully climbed up from a valley visited by constant thunderstorms. Resting on the steep and winding path that leads up to the mountain peak, he is able to look down on the storms now raging below him. The storms are there. They are very real. But he is above them. He no longer feels their fury.

Enlightenment

The Pure Land has all the qualities of Nirvana as described in classic Buddhist literature: the devotee can look forward to freedom from the endless samsaric round of births and deaths; and one achieves union with the Buddha.

Another way of thinking about this liberation from self-power is that it represents an alchemical transformation from negative to positive energy — with all the opportunities for growth and wholeness and individuation that are inherent in the process. All the energy that was blocked off, repressed, and tied up in the various defenses and unskillful devices employed by the ego in its destructive exercise of power is now available for more suitable goals.

Acceptance

To the over thirteen million adherents of Shin Buddhism in contemporary Japan, it seems likely that the attraction of Shinshu lies in its loving, non-judgmental, unqualified acceptance of the individual "just as he is" — with all his or her inadequacies, misdeeds, and shortcomings.

The admission of powerlessness to help oneself — and surrender to the will of a higher, completely other-power — can transform our lives and generate in us the "everlasting yea" to life that is the mark of the true believer in Tariki. Paul Tillich writes movingly of the experience: "In grace something is overcome; grace occurs 'in spite of' something; grace occurs in spite of separation and estrangement. Grace is the *re*union with life, the *re*conciliation of the self with itself. Grace is the acceptance of that which is rejected. Grace transforms fate into a meaningful destiny; it changes guilt into confidence and courage. There is something triumphant in the word 'grace.' In spite of the abounding of sin, grace abounds much more."

"We cannot transform our lives unless we allow them to be transformed by that stroke of grace. It happens; or it does not happen. And certainly it does not happen if we try to force it upon ourselves. . . . Grace strikes us when we are in great pain and restlessness. It strikes us when we walk through the dark valley of a meaningless and empty life. It strikes us when our disgust for our own being, our indifference, our weakness, our hostility, and our lack of direction and composure have become intolerable to us. It strikes us when, year after year, the longed-for perfection of life does not appear, when the old compulsions reign within us as they have for decades, when despair destroys all joy and courage. Sometimes at that moment a wave of light breaks into our darkness, and it is as though a voice were saying: 'You are accepted. *You are accepted*, accepted by that which is greater than you.'"

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Believing Heart: Faith; heart or mind which receives without doubting.
Favor: Amida's favor, free gift, grace. The principle of Shin teaching is "just ask and you will be saved" and not "do this and salvation will be its reward." Nothing is imposed on one as the price of salvation. Amida's gift has no condition attached to it. The believer and his mortal weaknesses, just as they are, are absorbed in the infinite grace of Amida.
Jikiri: Self-power salvation through self-effort.
Jodo: The Pure Land; the Land of Bliss, Paradise.
Jodomon: The Pure Land Path.
Kannagara: The Way of the Gods.
Ki: The recipient of the dharma, the devotee who utters *Nembutsu.*
Latter-Day: *Masse,* the world of the latter period of the Buddha's teaching, when the doctrine alone is still alive, but there is neither practice nor enlightenment.
Name: The Name of Amida Buddha; often interchangeable with *Nembutsu.*
Nembutsu: Nembutsu literally means "to think of Buddha." In Shin, however, it is more than a mere remembering of Buddha, it is thinking his name, holding it in mind. The Name consists of six characters or syllables, na-mu-a-mi-da-butsu. In actuality, the name contains more than Buddha's Name, for Namu is added to it. Namu is *namas* in Sanskrit and means "adoration" or "salutation." The Name therefore is "Adoration for Amida Buddha," and this is made to stand for Amida's "Name." In the Japanese Pure Land schools, Nembutsu usually refers to invoking the Name, "Namu-Amida-Butsu."
Ocho: "Side-wise leap." The experience by which, according to Shinran, one's rebirth in the Pure Land is absolutely assured.
Ojo: "To go and be reborn," the assurance of rebirth in the Pure Land.
One Thought: "One Thought" or "One Calling" represents the one instant of faith establishment.
Original Vow: The eighteenth of Amida's forty-eight prayers or vows, which sets forth Amida's strong resolve to save all beings without exception, if they call upon his name even only once in sincerity of heart.
Oya-Sama: The title bespeaking informality and friendliness, by which Shin devotees refer to Amida.
Shaba World: "This world" as opposed to Hell, and to Jodo, the Pure Land.
Shinshu: The popular name for the Jodo-Shin sect of Japanese Pure Land Buddhism. The Shin sect of Buddhism founded by Shinran.
Shodomon: The "Holy Path," as distinguished from the Jodomon, or Pure Land Path. The Holy Path leads to salvation through self-help; the Pure Land Path brings salvation through Amida's grace.
Shomyo: Pronouncing or uttering the Name of Amida Buddha.
Tariki: Salvation through Amida's power or grace.

THE INTUITIVE EXPERIENCE

by EUGENE RAUDSEPP

Many mystics claim we can know God only by it

THE TERM most often used for the mystical apprehension of the divine nature of reality is "intuition." This mystical or intuitive experience brings to an individual a sense of profound well-being and harmony with him or herself and the universe. In this experience there is no separation between subject and object, inner and outer, knower and known; instead, the person experiences a state of pure consciousness, a feeling of oneness with everything. Philosopher Stanislav Grof has defined spiritual intuitive experiences as those involving "an expansion or extension of consciousness beyond the usual ego boundaries

and beyond the limitations of time and/or space." Spiritual intuition enables one to transcend ego boundaries and the limitations of conceptual intellect and thus apprehend directly and purely the essential truth of reality.

Spiritual or religious intuition is not the exclusive possession of recognized mystics, but is found in all human beings in greater or lesser degree. Although often fleeting or short-lived, spiritual intuition can have a profound and lasting effect on a person's life by dispelling all doubts and replacing them with feelings of bliss, awe, wonder, joy, enlightenment, and a sense of unity with all things. Such an experience of cosmic consciousness and enlightenment usually deepens and expands a person's sense of the divine in the process of living.

The spiritual dimension of intuition is the basic ground from which all other forms of intuition are derived. Perhaps the closest relative to spiritual intuition is creative artistic inspiration. When it is intense, the artist typically feels that he is tuning in on transcendental truths, and that he has the capacity for their expression in his art. In both spiritual and artistic intuitive experiences this rare harmony of the mind is referred to as an unusual exaltation, rapture, transport, enthusiasm, ecstasy, elevating excitement of the soul, or "oceanic feeling." In both, the intuition is usually sudden, passive, transient, and ineffable. It yields a spiritual quality of pleasure and the experience of beauty, and often results in an increased sense of vitality.

What is Intuition?

Although any single definition of intuitive thinking is almost certain to be partial and incomprehensive, the process can be defined "operationally." It is an experential holistic way of knowing or reasoning where the weighing and balancing of evidence is carried on unconsciously. Intuitive perceptions and "knowings" invariably ring true even though we often do not know *how* we know what we know. The word *intuition* comes from the Latin *intuire*, which roughly means "looking, regarding, or knowing from within."

Intuition sometimes appears in awareness only as a vague feeling or hunch, but if focused on and attended to, it can develop into an increasingly clear and useful perception. Intuition can provide very specific and concrete solutions to problems, yet the person even with vivid perceptions retains the quality of knowing without knowing how he knows.

Intuition and Creativity

Is there any experimental evidence that a high correlation exists between intuitive ability and creativity? In an extensive study, Dr Donald W. MacKinnon and his associates at the University of California tested hundreds of creative and non-creative subjects in a number of fields. They found that the person who favors sense-perception is "inclined to focus upon his immediate sensory experience." He concentrates on the sensory attributes of his experience and centers his attention on existing facts as they are given. In contrast, the intuitive-perceptive person "immediately and instinctively perceives the deeper meanings and possibilities inherent in situations and ideas which he experiences." He is "ever alert to links and bridges between what is present and

that which is not yet thought of." He focuses habitually upon what may be, rather than upon what is. Dr MacKinnon concludes: "It is not that this finding is surprising. One would not expect creative persons to be stimulus-and-object bound, but instead, ever alert to the as-yet-not realized. It is rather the *magnitude* of the preference for intuitive perception that is so striking among highly creative persons. They enjoy taking risks, and are willing to expose themselves to criticism and challenge. . . They describe themselves as independent, foresighted, confident, and spontaneous."

When Are Intuitions Valid?

Intuitions can only be validated when acted upon and proved right or wrong. There are, however, some subjective clues used by people who believe in the intuitive hunch. They know, for example, that one characteristic of a valid intuition is the keen sense of value that adheres to it. It arrives brimming with tremendous power, energy and positive feeling, and a sense of conviction and certainty.

The person is sure, at the moment the intuition occurs, that he has grasped the core of his problem. He has found the best alternative for solution. Doubt and uncertainty about the validity of the solution may occur later. But an individual who trusts his intuitive judgment seldom abandons it because of later doubts.

How To Use Intuitive Thinking

Some people are better at tuning into and using intuitive approaches than are others. From individuals successful in their reliance on intuitive thinking, these general rules for when and how to rely on it can be offered:

Watch for Bias. Do not confuse intuitive thinking with intimately personal, subjective thinking. It often emerges as a result of prejudices, biases, fears, wishful thinking or purely emotional reactions. It takes constant analysis of one's thinking to be able to separate genuine intuitive grain from emotional chaff. Some intuitive feelings and insights can be confused with wishful thinking or anxiety. With some individuals self-deception remains a formidable obstacle to genuine intuitive insights. If an apparently genuine intuitive perception or insight turns out to be dead wrong, it did not emerge from intuition, but from self-deception or wishful/fearful thinking.

Keep a Record. Determine first how strong your intuitive ability is. Keep a record in a diary or journal of the intuitive insights that have occurred. Rate them objectively. If a majority or a reasonable number of them have worked out, then cultivate and pay attention to your intuition. Diary-keeping is the best way to check whether you have genuine intuitive hunches or mainly wishful projections. If, after follow-up, you discover that many of your hunches turn out to be inaccurate, take stock and try to learn how your personal interests, wishes, fears, and anxieties tend to distort your perceptions and block the way to clear and valid intuitions.

It Requires Preparation. Intuitive thinking requires thorough spadework on a problem. It requires getting basic facts and information before intuitive

processes can take over. Thus Dr Jerome S. Bruner of Harvard University says: "Individuals who have extensive familiarity with a subject matter appear more often to leap intuitively into a decision or to a solution of a problem — one which later proves to be appropriate."

Complex Problems

Intuition is used to its greatest advantage in solving problems that involve many complex, interrelated factors. When you have many variables, logical reasoning is frequently inadequate for synthesizing all the elements into a coherent whole. The intuitive process, by comparison, is manifold. Its multiple processing of information enables it to carry out a work of synthesis.

In some problem situations, failure to reach a good solution is due to an inability to view the problem in proper perspective. One may, for example, be so concerned with certain facets of the problem that he fails to see others containing the element of a better solution. Cultivated intuitive ability enables one also to recognize the possibilities inherent in many complex situations. One reason for this is the ability of intuition to delve into the vast storehouse of knowledge in the subconscious, where everything one has learned and experienced both consciously and subliminally, is stored. Tapping into this rich storehouse enables one to perceive or sense the as-yet-not realized possibilities inherent in many complex situations or problems.

Physicist Fritjof Capra says: "Rational knowledge and rational activities certainly constitute the major part of scientific research, but are not all there is to it. The rational part of research would, in fact, be useless if it were not complemented by the intuition that gives scientists new insights and makes them creative. These insights tend to come suddenly, and characteristically not when sitting at a desk working out the equations; but when relaxing, in the bath, during a walk in the woods, on the beach, etc. During these periods of relaxation after concentrated intellectual activity, the intuitive mind seems to take over and can produce the sudden clarifying insights which give so much joy and delight to scientific research."

Dr. Frances E. Vaughn, a psychologist, offers these valuable guidelines for awakening intuition, and for expanding one's capacity for perception and comprehension:

Intention — The first requirement for consciously awakening intuition is a clear intention to do so. Intuition is already within you, but to awaken it you have to value it and *intend* to develop it.

Time — Your willingness to devote time to tuning in to your intuition, making space for its unfolding in your life, is part of valuing and developing it.

Relaxation — Letting go of physical and emotional tension gives intuition the space to enter your conscious awareness.

Silence — Intuition flourishes in silence. Learning to quiet the mind is therefore part of the training for awakening intuition. Various meditative practices are useful in learning to maintain the necessary inner silence.

Honesty — Willingness to face self-deception and to be honest with

yourself and others is essential. Creating any kind of smokescreen interferes with clear vision. Giving up pretenses is a big step in awakening intuition.

Receptivity — Learning to be quiet and receptive allows intuition to unfold. Too much activity or conscious programming gets in the way of intuitive awareness that emerges when a receptive attitude is cultivated.

Sensitivity — Finely tuned sensitivity to both inner and outer processes provides more information and expands intuitive knowing. Sensitivity to energy awareness and the quality of experience is particularly useful.

Non-verbal Play — Drawing, music, movement, clay and other forms of non-verbal expression, done in a spirit of play rather than for the purpose of goal-oriented achievement, provide excellent channels for activating intuitive functions.

Trust — Trusting the process, trusting yourself, trusting your experience are the keys to trusting and developing your intuition.

Openness — If you are afraid of being seen, you may close up and then be unable to see. Being open to all experiences, both inner and outer, gives intuition the space it needs to develop fully.

Courage — Fear gets in the way of direct experience and often generates deception. Your willingness to experience and confront your fears will facilitate the expansion of intuition.

Acceptance — A non-judgmental attitude, an acceptance of things as they are, including self-acceptance, allows intuition to function freely.

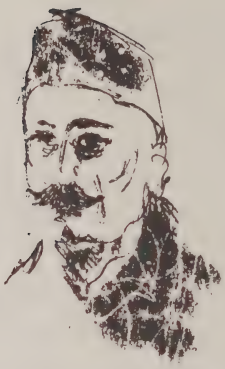
Non-Attachment — The willingness to let things be as they are, rather than trying to make them be the way you would like them to be, or the way you think they should be, allows intuition to emerge. You can see things as they are only when desires and fears are out of the way.

Daily Practice — Intuitive awareness grows with daily attention. If you discount or neglect it most of the time and only want it to perform occasionally, it may not respond.

Intuition is the basic foundation of the beautiful, of moral norms, and of religious values. It has furnished the initial impulse to an enormous number of sensory and dialectic discoveries in all fields of human knowledge and values.
— PITIRIM SOROKIN

A Guide to Gurdjieff

by AMY STROMSTEN



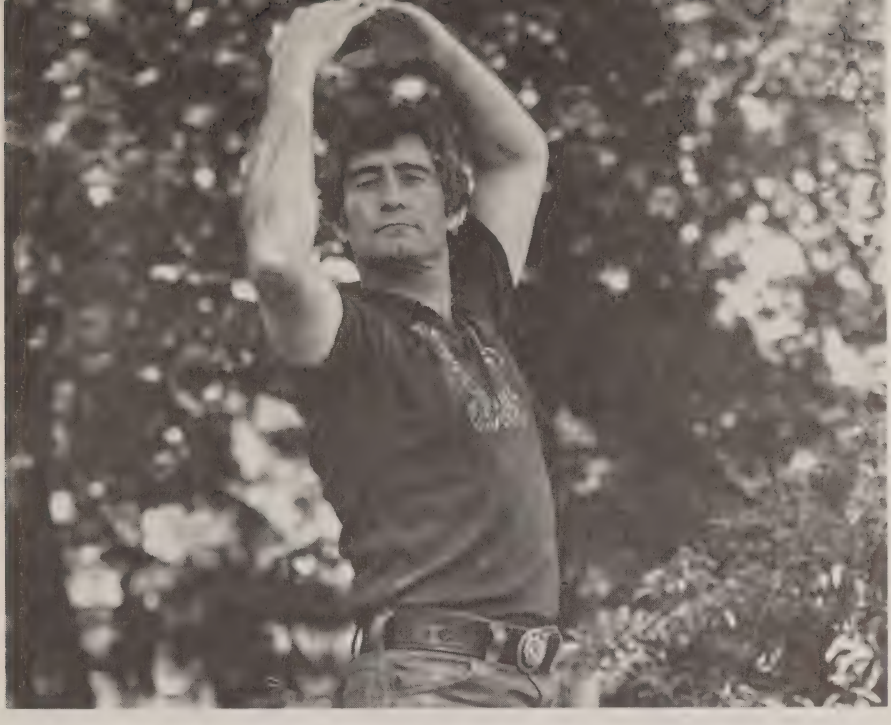
GEORGE IVANOVITCH GURDJIEFF was born in the town of Gumri, located on the Armenian plains, in December, 1877. The place in which he was born is significant in that it was one of the heavily traveled routes between Europe and Asia. Dialects and religions bubbled together in that melting pot of Asia Minor. Both of those ingredients were to have an important impact on the impressionable and eclectic Gurdjieff.

His early education was provided by his father, a bard who gave him a sense of the great culture and heritage of the East. His tutoring came from men whose training was both religious and scientific. From this background Gurdjieff developed a system of ideas based upon ancient knowledge which he spent forty years accumulating, and placed it into practice when he founded the "Institute for the Harmonious Development of Man" in Moscow in 1910. He said that the purpose in establishing the Institute was, "here there are neither English nor Russians, Jews nor Christians, but only those following one aim: to be able to be."

The Institute attracted a number of prominent persons from varied disciplines which included: P.D. Ouspensky, the de Saltzmanns, the de Hartmanns. Eventually, for political reasons, the Institute was moved from Moscow to Paris.

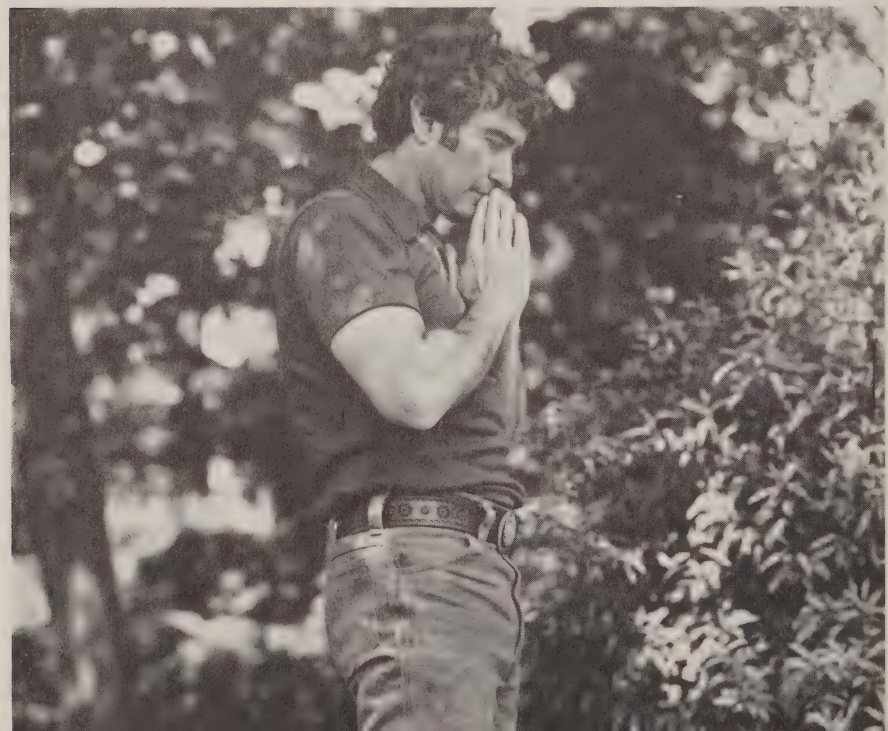
The central preoccupation of Gurdjieff's teachings is that he believed that man was "asleep" and not fully conscious and, as such, was unfinished and incomplete. He constantly stressed that the quest for meaning in human life was within the grasp of all persons, but that it required a lifetime of persistent self-realization. The methods which he developed were those of shocking his students out of "sleep" and making them aware of a greater consciousness.

Gurdjieff blended the esoteric ancient teachings of his heritage with modern scientific thinking. He did not proselytize, but felt that one should be attracted to his ideas rather than have them promoted. Gurdjieff stressed the importance of the guidance of a teacher to enable the student to absorb his ideas fully. What is of greatest consequence in Gurdjieff's teaching is his attempt to provide a way for man to realize his full potential in daily life — to awaken himself to a greater consciousness and awareness in living "today." The Gurdjieff discipline does not require exotic forms of meditation, nor does it



Gurdjieff student Malcolm Zarnfaller displays four movements from Gurdjieff's sacred dances. The purpose of the sacred dances, which are of Sufi origin, is to create a feeling of unity between the emotional, intellectual and physical centers in the individual.

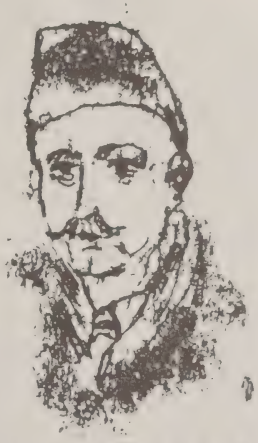
The movements are done vigorously for an hour or more, producing subtle psychic changes in the dancers. The positions are unnatural, and the student must be fully conscious at all times. Not only are the movements made precisely, but the student must be aware of breathing and counting.



require that one leaves one's job. The teachings ask the student to experience his present situation more fully, and to find meaning within the context of ordinary life. Gurdjieff said, "he who has got rid of the disease 'tomorrow' has the possibility to attain what he is here for." Gurdjieff believed that if we *really* understood that we may die at any moment, we would be completely motivated to work on ourselves.

Gurdjieff: Seeker of the Truth

(Excerpts from the book published by Harper & Row)



The Human Condition: Humanity exists on earth to serve a definite role in the cosmic scheme of things. This role involves the transformation of energies. It is generally served unconsciously and without individual benefit. We are as if asleep to the nature and purpose of our lives. The result of this hypnotic process is that the adult human being is like a sleepwalker, an automaton, a machine whose functioning is fragmented and inconsistent and has little or nothing to do with the deeply buried individuality stifled within. As in the case of the legendary phoenix, "one must be born, but in order to be born one must first die, and in order to die one must first awaken. The awakening can be gradual, and occur at first in brief moments. But the death must be all at once and forever."

On Spiritual Paths: Gurdjieff stated that there have been five major religious traditions in the history of the world: Buddhist, Hindu, Islamic, Christian, and Lamaist. Every religion has an outer and inner aspect. The outer or esoteric dogma and ritual and theology tell what is to be done; the inner or esoteric practice shows how it is to be done. Within religions there are four ways toward self-realization. The way of the fakir stresses physical mastery and develops will; the way of the monk uses prayer and devotion to heal the heart and transubstantiate emotion; the way of the yogi deepens understanding for a lucid and clear mind. Then hidden from view and involving physical body, heart, and mind, there is the way of the sly man, the fourth of these ways, which works upon all three parts of the human being simultaneously.

The Evolution of Humanity: Humanity neither progresses nor evolves by nature. *One* can evolve; humanity cannot, for evolution proceeds only consciously. Yet humanity must evolve or perish. In order to help others one must first learn to help oneself. People's consuming interest in changing others is a sign of laziness in working on their own evolution.

JEAN DE LA FONTAINE:

by JOHN S.D. GLAUS

IN THIS DAY AND AGE, can there be any virtue in breaking the binding of Voltaire's *Age of Louis XIV* and making oneself comfortable with a highly civilized, yet defunct society? Perhaps not. Perhaps we are more interested with modern times, times punctuated by such quick movements and such jarring stops that should some particle of beauty capture our attention, its transience is so fleeting that it whispers away before a moment's reflection. Should one choose comfort, one may well end up entertained as well as instructed as Voltaire's agile mind leads us effortlessly into that age with one sweeping stroke: "In what concerned eloquent poetry and literature, works of morality and pleasure, the French were the legislators of Europe." If the meaning no longer captures our attention, if our imagination is not stirred, it is probably because our curiosity is as staid as our attitude towards dinosaurs; for they too inhabited the earth, but now are extinct as well as forgotten. Perhaps it would be a mistake to close Voltaire.

Why, one might ask, was so grandiloquent a term as *Grand Siecle* used to describe a period of time whose scent has long since passed? For sure, those magnificent edifices — a little grayed, a little decayed — have remained solid. They were built as the evidence of an age which unfolded itself across an entire continent: alive, palpitating, bold — pretentious. But now, no longer does breath infuse life, the vivacity has wilted, the glitter has tarnished, the memory is lost and forgetfulness is everywhere. One has indeed come across a vanished age. Yet all that needs to be done to recapture the fragrance and savor the brilliance is to sit back with Voltaire and flow on the waves of words written with deliberate ease. The fluency of his thought floats us across the pages, and we become acquainted with a style of life so wondrous — so alien to our own — that it appears fantastic. So it was. But the reasons for its eminence are now shrouded and a little difficult to determine.

It was a time of indescribable complexities. All was founded upon the rigid adherence of convention dictated by a supreme monarch in whose hands the temporal and spiritual reins were firmly, if not autocratically held. This image of regality, Louis XIV, became an entity so puissant, so indivisible, that he symbolized God incarnate; through the exercise of divine perogative, and for the convenience of submission to his vigilance, Louis had the aristocracy housed *en famille* at Versailles.

Versailles was the quintessence of a personality. That incredible structure,

THE PARNASSIAN BUTTERFLY

magnificent beyond belief — with its gardens, fountains, and myriad lesser creations — became the summation of the crown, and the visible expression of the age. If such had been its sole aspiration, then it was done and done divinely. However, it was done to the detriment of those who resided there. Supported by Louis' benevolent despotism and sinecures, inflated by the majesty of their own class, the fabric of their being struggled with its naivete, its delicacy, its piety, and its lust; until it could no longer escape the dreadful decay and its final conclusion.

However, the spectral agony of its death was not apparent during the halcyon days of 1643, the year which marked Louis' ascendancy to the most powerful throne in Europe. The entire gloriousness of France was manifest, and Louis' purpose was to ensure its continuance. But what of the aristocracy? At the moment of this monarch's rise to eminence, the Middle Ages had waned, and with it the aristocracy's primary purpose. If their *raison d'etre* — chivalry and dueling — was no longer available to them, to what purpose could they lend themselves if not mere decoration? They assumed a very important and viable function as patrons; for they now possessed sufficient leisure to expend their wealth on those amenities which proved far more immortal than they could have dreamed. For in the brief span of its meteoric career, the *Grand Siecle* left behind in the incandescence of its trail a wealth of genius, with a style so marked and significant that no single period can claim to have expanded in so many directions with so many ramifications.

The great creative force of that age worked for the benefit and amenity of a select public. They were commissioned to create that beauty, and were invited to partake of its conspicuousness. Yet they were not of it. They became the functionaries of the wealthy, whose main purpose seemed to be to separate themselves from their money for the splendid acquisitions which their natures desired. The creative outpouring of that age was to become renowned for its craftsmanship, the excellence of which was revealed by a small group of masters whose mastery of pen, brush, and plumb line had been witnessed singly in the past but never before in such concentration. Of the great writers of the *Grand Siecle* it appears that they were born with a sense of clarity, precision, and graceful simplicity cast from a mould — not from their immediate posterity — but from an age of greater captivation and grandeur: from the Greeks and Romans. This creative element was alone responsible for capturing the *spirit* of their age; for the task of distilling its greatness, its splendor, its intensity, and portrayed the refinement of its flowering, and the beauty towards which it tended.

Let us reflect for a moment upon this great age — majestically aloof from the tenebrous spirituality of the Middle Ages, which was cast aside in favor of the pristine freshness of a greater antiquity — and enter into the life of one who, so nobly aspired towards that beauty, and so wonderfully achieved it. He was indeed a rare butterfly, who ceaselessly fluttered from the boudoirs of some to the salons of others. By his artistic ability he brought to fruition the *Fables* which enhanced our childhood imagination and provided thought for our maturity.

Jean de La Fontaine was born on July 8, 1621, at Chateau Thierry in the Champagne, and although his family was of ancient lineage they could not presume any aristocracy. His father, Charles, was the master of waterways and forests, and his mother, Francoise Pidoux, was a rich widow whose substantial dowry allowed for a very satisfactory life.

Jean's preamble to literary fame, that is the early years, have not been recorded, except for the knowledge that his academic pursuits were neglected. The only memorable occurrence in his youth was an introduction to some religious works which stimulated his attention. The readings predisposed this sensitive soul to what he thought would be an ecclesiastical life. If this proved to be nothing more than the exuberance of youth searching for its expression and tastes; it did lead to Paris. La Fontaine yielded to this *penchant*, and at the age of twenty — his mind aroused by noble and pious aspirations — entered the Oratoire of the Rue Saint Honore, to prepare for the priesthood. The mystery of religion, the ceremony of the liturgy, and the decorum of the order, all exerted a strong attraction on him; but through his veins coursed both willfulness and sublime eccentricity. If the study of theology proved monotonous and interrupted his dreaming, he subjected the prayers of the liturgy to his burgeoning penmanship, and soon they were metered and rhymed. If he did not enjoy the costume of the cloth, then he filled his *biretta* with crumbs, and lowered it from his second story window and watched the birds feed. Soon the august authorities of the Oratoire provided La Fontaine with the realization that the devices and desires of his heart were not compatible with the prospects of the vocation. So La Fontaine left the religious community, unscathed yet marked. Marked not by religious disappointment, but by something of far greater consequence.

After this brief stay at the Oratoire, Jean returned to Chateau Thierry, where his father had prepared his future with paternal circumspection. He accepted, as the natural function of an obedient son, his father's duties as master of waterways and forests. The duties were not abhorrent to him, although he was not equipped with that portion of commonsense which is required in such matters. La Fontaine, also, accepted his father's choice of bride, and at the time, it appeared that the match was judiciously made. Though he was twenty-five and she fourteen, she brought a well-sized dowry to complement the easy living he was used to; she was pretty and he was bright, yet some minor idiosyncracy was already established in La Fontaine's character. What it was, was very simple. No man loved women more than La Fontaine, and no man was sooner nor for longer more enraptured to their charms. Throughout his life this theme was to prove consistent. He proved time and time again to be always under the spell of their charms. The fact was that though La Fontaine loved his wife greatly, he could not reconcile the nature of his character with the solid and confining institution of marriage. This was the mistake of his life. So, after twelve years of benign neglect, Jean and Marie walked their separate paths.

By this time, La Fontaine had become known as a poet of some distinction, and through his indulgent friends was introduced to Fouquet. Fouquet,

(continued on page 57)

"Desire entered the One in the beginning;
It was the earliest seed . . ."
(Hymn of Creation, Rigveda)

On Desire & Contentment

by BRAD HILL

TRADITIONAL Eastern religious thought places more emphasis on human desire, as an attribute to be reckoned with, than do religious systems which forego the notion of reincarnation. Half Gautama Buddha's fundamental message rests on the point that a human incarnation is filled with suffering and is born of desire. The Buddhist path to freedom from the circle of continued death and rebirth lies on the renunciation of wants, and the cyclical nature of the wheel of life is akin to the incessant rebirth of desire. But all the great teachers, regardless of their school, tell us that we must be desireless if we are to attain self-realization, that we must be so focused on our inner fullness that there is no room for our cravings, and they fall away. Buddha, Jesus, Lao Tzu, Aurobindo, the Vedanta — all speak of "desire, that great unquiet harasser and troubler of man;" all have taught that "there is no greater vice than the wish to acquire," and that the craving for possession of things and situations around us is misguided, since "the kingdom of heaven is within you."

Nothing can be opposed except through its opposite. The opposite of desire is contentment. Since contentment is the essence of everything for which we strive both individually and as a society, fixing it in the mind as the antithesis of desire is necessary to avoid confusing the two. This is especially true in a society of relative affluence in which day-to-day desires are easily gratified. Looked at plainly, it seems obvious that when we desire, we suffer discontent, and when we are content, it is because we have no wants. We satisfy our cravings in an attempt to be free of them, but acquired things can lose their satisfaction as the same desires recur.

Human attention is naturally distracted by incompleteness. While desire is the sense of something lacking, contentment is the appreciation of wholeness. There are two approaches to any desire: satisfy it or frustrate it. One is surrender to the seemingly incomplete, the other is victory over it. Desire is by nature impermanent, and its tendency is to fade if not acted upon. If by choice we overcome even the smallest desire, it serves to direct our attention toward the quiet, abiding fullness of our life, and toward the idea that what we desire is not always as necessary as it may seem. Left unchecked, desire's pace will outstrip its enjoyments. But the hard-to-attain feeling of inner completeness is a deeper, more worthwhile possession, and the mind and

heart should grasp for what gives the most fundamental spiritual satisfaction.

SWAMI Vivekananda writes, "the cause of all miseries from which we suffer is desire," also that "misery is caused by ignorance and nothing else." Any apparent contradiction in the two statements is resolved if we accustom ourselves to the idea that desire is ignorance. Again, Eastern tradition addresses the question more directly, and in Hindu terms the unsatisfied groping of desire is just as an aspect of the maya, or illusion, which is the stuff of our perceptions. As we are blinded by the glaring, discordant illusion of the world, desire is a symptom of that blindness. In the Bhagavad Gita it is written that "knowledge is enveloped by this constant enemy of the knower, by this insatiable flame of desire." Those who are at peace, immune to the restless pull of that flame, always seem somehow wise, as if they dwell in a place inaccessible to us, or are privy to some secret. Continual contentment requires the understanding that circumstance is always appropriate to need.

That which will eventually be overcome must, for the time being, be used as a tool. Just as we naturally go beyond all things of the mind with the help of the intellect, the first step toward freedom from desire is to want that freedom. In the Upanishads it is written of the seeker: "As is his desire, so is his resolve; as is his resolve, so is the deed he does; as is the deed he does, so is that which he attains to." No matter for now that the desire for perfect vision begins with the erroneous vision of imperfection. The true, pure perception of everyone as a whole, perfect being, including the perceiver, is reserved for those at the apex of spiritual seeking. We must deal with our perceptions as they are, not as we would have them be — it is the only way to align ourselves with our ideals. As we crave to be free of our relentless patterns of desire, so will we be moved to search for contentment where it naturally rests; as we seek and find that contentment, so will we be encouraged to forego the impermanent in favor of the lasting; as we choose the path within us, so will we attain the calm, still nature that is our heritage.

Those who recognize the uniformity of all human reaching can see that desires in the individual also spring from one seed. The line from the Rigveda which prefaces these thoughts contains this apt image. Desire is like a hardy weed in the field of the mind. If, through the attraction of a particular desire, we remain oblivious to the nature of the seed planted within us, our mind and heart will be increasingly governed by its growth. If we fail to see the uniform character of all desires, we will be unable to resist them, for each will seem uniquely necessary. Everybody must, of course, recognize and deal with their pattern of desire in their own way, rejecting or investing themselves according to their awareness and discrimination. But we must all eventually begin to acknowledge the inevitable, cyclical nature of the demon. Acquisition is manifested desire for wholeness, and possession is not a lasting satisfaction, for it refeeds the desire for acquisition. Only as this seems more evident will we gently, gradually be turned inward in our quest for contentment.

Where shall the world be found, where will the world resound? Not here, here is not enough silence. — T.S. Eliot

SOLITUDE

by DORIS DONNELLY

SCRATCH any theology of prayer and the spiritual life for its blueprint of maturity or holiness, and you will be wisely counseled to seek solitude. One eminent guide, Teresa of Avila, suggested: "Settle yourself in solitude and you will come upon Him in yourself." The solitude in question is of the inner variety — a solitude of heart that can be maintained in the midst of noise because its roots are deep and unflappable. External silence is usually a means to that peace and serene kind of solitude, but silence, as we all know, is never a guarantee of solitude. In the literature of the hesychast tradition — the Eastern Christian tradition at the heart of *The Way Of A Pilgrim* — Abba Poemen advised:

> "One person appears to be keeping silent and yet condemns others in his heart: such a person is speaking all the time. Another person talks from morning till evening and yet keeps silent; that is, he or she says nothing except what is helpful to others."

I stumbled upon the benefits quite by accident when my children were babies. During those years, each afternoon during their two o'clock naps, I took the phone off the hook and soaked in a bathtub of hot sudsy water for what had to be the most luxurious time of my day. The time had no agenda, no game plan, no major decisions to mull over. It was just fifteen minutes or so of blessed quiet that helped patch together spirit and psyche that were bruised in the avalanche of demands and weariness endemic to the early days of motherhood. Those remedial chunks of time were exactly what I needed to find the energy and inner peace to face the rest of the day.

As time wore on, and the original euphoria of the early months of my discovery of solitude wore off, I began to see those times for what they really were in my life: a time not for tuning *out*, but for tuning *in*; a time to center my energies, my self; a time to come in contact with the inner springs and stirrings that were neglected among the constant tugs of motherhood and the demands of a fulltime career. It was a time to set aside clutter and take notice of the mystery of my own life, understanding what made me tick. It was not long before I came to see those patches of solitude as the silent springs that fed my prayer life, that focused my relationship with God, and that enabled me to do

all things from a base and through a power definitely beyond, though now mysteriously a part of me.

Along the way, in the dozen years that followed of this daily calisthenics of the spirit, I have kept an eye out for kindred spirits — men and women who could inform and articulate this need for me and the many others who shared it. And I found them. I looked for people who could enjoy aloneness, make peace with themselves there, experience God's presence, and come back re-charged to the dailiness of their lives. I learned from these compatriots what the benefits of solitude are. Most of my guides would agree that those benefits come quickly and that there are at least four of them.

1. Solitude Puts Us in Contact with Reality

AN OLD PROVERB puts if succinctly: "People who open their mouths, close their eyes." That is another way of saying that the purpose of solitude is to enable us to see and hear.

It is mercifully not our own voice that we hear because we have yielded control of our tongues to vindicate and justify and manipulate. One of the fruits of silence is that we let our justification rest entirely with God.

I recall a recent episode when a neighbor of mine on her way to her daily hideout for prayer in her semi-finished attic was halted by a telephone call that brought distressing news from her office. In her absence, a co-worker was making a push for her job. My friend was tempted to get in her car, zoom downtown to the office, expose the plot, and straighten things out. Instead, she pondered Psalm 54 ("But God is my helper, the Lord is my defender") and prayed, leaving her vindication in the hands of God. A more peaceful, secure, and beautiful woman went back to the office the following week to face her wornout and defeated rival.

We are all familiar with the counsel to "sleep on it" when an important decision has to be made. Solitude provides the opportunity to do something similar to sleeping: a slowing down takes place, a quieting of the inside and outside, a sensing of the greatness of the world around us, and greater awareness of some of our major concerns. In our own lives, we become conscious of our own resources and those of our faith. In quiet, we face our fears and worries with the realistic assessment that there are powers at work other than our own. We worry less. Anxiety diminishes. Depression goes.

2. Solitude Helps Us Become Centered

THE CENTERING EXPERIENCE is the heart of solitude and is probably best explained by its opposite. The underside of centering is a sense of fragmentation: hundreds of responsibilities, projects, and concerns freefloating without a core. Anne Morrow Lindbergh, a helpful guide in matters of solitude since her famous retreat to the Maine Coast while she was the mother of five young children and the wife of one of our greatest celebrities, refers to the German word *zerreisenheit* to describe this feeling. "Torn-to-pieces hood," it is translated, and we all know what she is talking

about. Not only are the spokes flying wild when *zerreisenheit* is being felt, but it also is accompanied by fear that the pieces will never be put back together again.

Centering counteracts that fear. Centering allows us to rearrange our lives and to focus at the heart of everything we're about. A power base that energizes our activities, it inspires a "collectedness" which is the sphere we must enter if we want to get hold of ourselves and the life spinning around us. Order. Focus. Energy. These are the byproducts of solitude.

There are those who connect this centering process with God. The philosopher Alfred North Whitehead said, "Religion is what people do with their solitariness." He had in mind something more than being physically apart, something akin to finding the climate for exploring a deeper dimension of our lives. Jung hints at that dimension when he suggests that in solitude "one may hope to find what it is that supports us when we can no longer support ourselves." Long before Whitehead or Jung, Epictetus wrote: "When you have closed your doors and darkened your room, remember never to say that you are alone, for you are not alone: God is *within.*"

3. Solitude Is an Investment

EACH AFTERNOON AT THREE a secretary holds off visitors and phone calls for half an hour so that a Wall Street stockbroker, a friend of mine, can "step aside" from his busy life. He has found an external locale, sitting in a chair in his office, to pause, think, pray, and become attentive and open to his own inner beepings. He claims these periods are an investment that yields an immediate increase in productivity. By means of his afternoon retreat he is renewed and reinvigorated. His pause is like a mini-vacation, and the benefits are similar.

It is not only physical rest that we need but a sort of psychic sleep as well. "We have to slow down the movement on the outside," Dag Hammarksjold said, "to pay attention to the voices within." Those are the voices that only silence can attend to, that only silence can honor.

Richard J. Foster, in *Celebration of Discipline*, suggests that we find or develop a "quiet place" designed for silence and solitude. Consider incorporating into the plans for a new house an inner sanctuary, a small place where any family member could go to be alone and silent. Why not? We build game rooms, TV rooms, family rooms, and play rooms, and deem them worth the expense. If you already own a home or live in an apartment, you might designate part of a room or even a chair as special. Whenever anyone is in it, he or she is saying, "Please don't bother me. I want to be alone."

4. Solitude Lets Us Notice Detail

When I find time to be alone, that state is not "dumbness," but a receptive attitude which Joseph Pieper, in his famous essay on *Leisure, The Basis of Culture*, defines as "not only the occasion but also the capacity for steeping

oneself in the whole of creation."

Stillness allows us to attend to detail: the detail of our own lives, the detail of other persons' lives, the detail of all forms of life around us. This attention to detail is an effort we are not energized to expand unless the waves stop lapping up around our dailiness, but Annie Dillard, Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek*, begs us to take time to notice, to look. "Look. . . at practically anything — the coot's foot, the mantis's face, a banana, the human ear — and see that not only did the creator create everything, but he's apt to create *anything*. He'll stop at nothing!"

Disraeli told us that "solitude is the nurse of enthusiasm." Frequently that enthusiasm connects with persons and things we have lived near but never took time to contemplate. Solitude provides that occasion and enables us to live at a deeper level of awareness and consciousness. That appears to have been Thoreau's motive for retreating to Walden Pond. "I wanted," he wrote, "to live deep and suck out all the marrow of life."

Several years ago, novelist Jessamyn West set out in a travel trailer for a three-month stay in the Colorado River backwoods. She documented her trip in a book called *Hide and Seek: A Continuing Journey.* Of all the things she learned from her experience, what surprised her most was that ". . . solitude, like a drug, can be addictive. The more you have it, the more you want it." Like Annie Dillard, she unraveled new mysteries in her solitude. For Jessamyn West, "Solitude is an unending colloquy between you and yourself and such persons as inhabit your memory and imagination." Persons who were blurs and not appreciated for their specialness were now individually cherished.

That exhilarating discovery, as well as solitude's benefits of productivity, balance, and perspective, combine to prompt a steady stream of people to find time for it. To find the place. To begin! Washington, D.C., activist-pastor Gordon Cosby put it this way:

"The one journey that ultimately matters is the journey into the place of stillness deep within one's self. To reach that place is to be home, to fail to reach it is to be forever restless."

SUGGESTED READING ON SOLITUDE

Gift From the Sea by Anne Morrow Lindbergh *(Random House, New York, $5).*
This small book is a gold mine of wisdom that has spoken to hundreds of thousands of readers since it was published in 1955. The setting of the book is the Maine seashore during a vacation that Mrs Lindbergh took alone and unaccompanied. On the beach, she considers the shells the sea tosses up. The perfect beauty of the moon shell reminds her of our need for solitude and of the negative attitude that surrounds our quest for aloneness: "How inexplicable it seems. Anything else will be accepted as a better excuse. If one sets aside time for a business appointment, a trip to the hairdresser, a social engagement, or a shopping expedition, that time is accepted as inviolable. But if one says: 'I cannot come because that is my hour to be alone,' one is con-

sidered rude, egotistical, or strange." This book is worth a rereading. In fact, it improves with age. Or is it that our appreciation grows?

Pilgrim at Tinker Creek by Annie Dillard *(Bantam Books, $1.95).* Part mystic, part poet, and a naturalist and explorer too, Annie Dillard fashions a triumph in these pages. She lives in a little house clamped to the side of Tinker Creek, which she likens to an anchorhold, the simple sheds of anchorites attached to churches in the early history of Christianity. For Dillard and us, Tinker Creek is an active mystery, fresh every minute. There is the mystery of continuous creation and all that providence implies — "the uncertainty of vision, the horror of the fixed, the dissolution of the present, the intricacy of beauty, the pressure of fecundity, the elusiveness of the free, and the flawed nature of perfection." The prose is vivid, intense, muscular, exceptional. This book gladly, passionately, and resolutely has powers to charge and transfigure. Required reading for any who would go farther on the journey of the spirit.

The Reasons Of The Heart: *A Journey Into Solitude and Back Again Into the Human Circle* by John S. Dunne, *(Macmillan, New York, $7.95).* To come to know the human heart we must first separate ourselves from humanity. Here, alone in the realm "where nothing happens," Dunne says, "we experience things more perfectly, more precisely, and more profoundly." Only by embracing solitude fully can we come to know ourselves and the path we are meant to pursue. And by coming to ourselves we come to others and then to God. At every stage of this journey, we find insight coming whenever the heart's desire becomes known to the mind. Dunne is not the first to undertake such a journey. Freud and Kierkegaard made similar ones. But, unlike Freud, Dunne is ready to accept the heart's reasons for believing in God. And unlike Kierkegaard, Dunne is prepared to follow the heart's search for God not only into solitude but also back again.

Thoughts in Solitude by Thomas Merton *(Farrar, Straus and Giroux, $3.95).* Merton held that solitude and interior prayer were closely linked with the awakening of the social conscience. It is in the depths of a person's aloneness that there lie the resources for resistance to injustice. Solitude is essential, for it is in solitude that one attains identification with the sufferings in the world. "Solitude and silence," Merton says, "teach me to love (others) for what they are, not for what they say." Merton should know. As a Trappist monk in the enclosed monastery at Gethsemani, Kentucky, and as a social critic who encouraged the civil rights movement and disengagement from Vietnam long before these causes were popular, he and his words never betray the human. It is always a singular privilege to be in his company.

THE GREAT SHEIKH Simak taught this as the prayer-secret: Man can pray only to the extent of his capacity. If he is alone, or taught to pray through books or in seminaries, he cannot understand or take part in the reality of prayer. One who has learned to pray, and who carries with him the illumination, can pass a portion of it to another man; so that he too can learn and develop prayer in himself. Written prayer is meaningless.

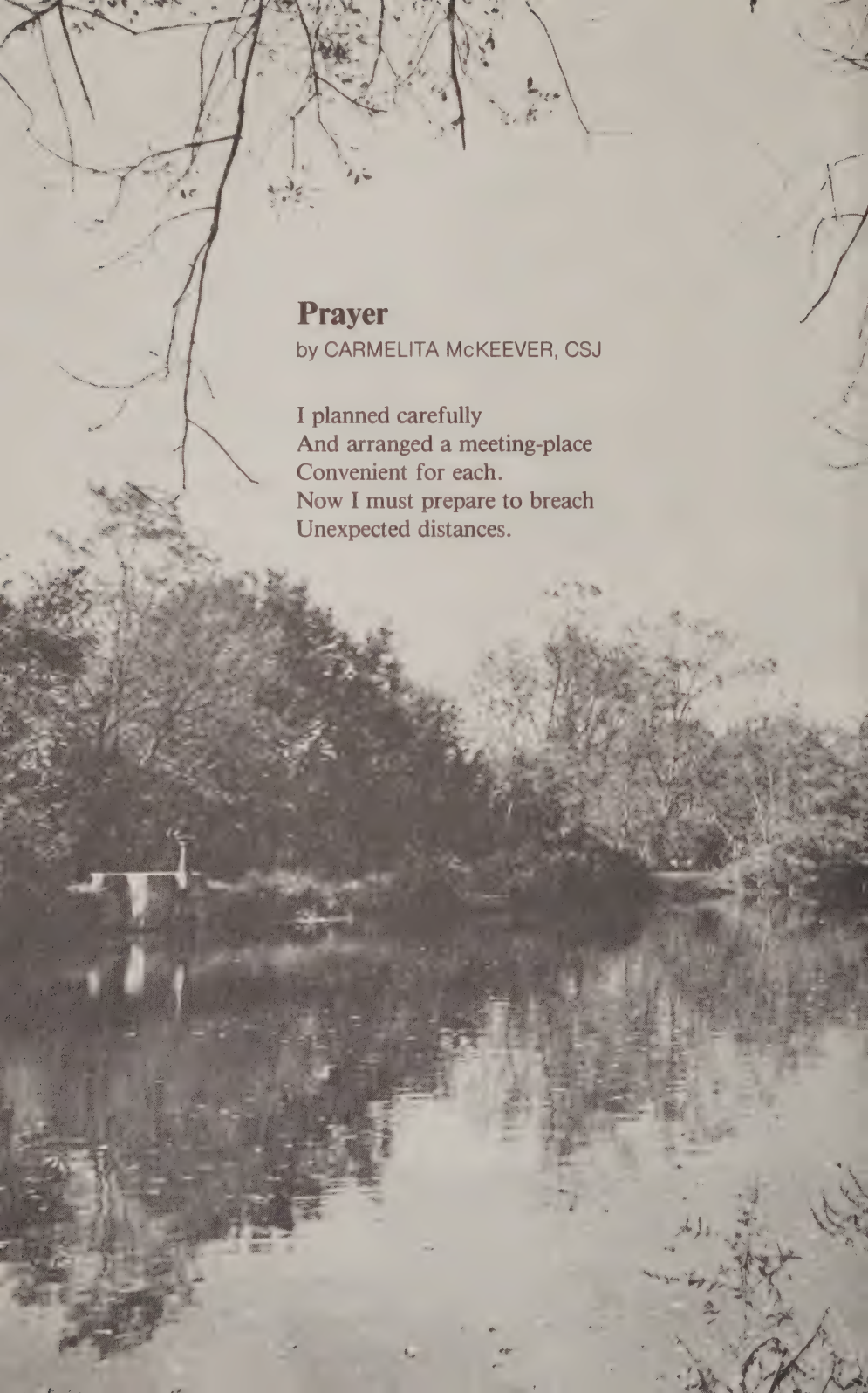
— IDRIES SHAH

O LORD, Thou knowest what is best for us, let this or that be done, as Thou shalt please. Give what Thou wilt, and how much Thou wilt, and when Thou wilt. Deal with me as Thou thinkest good, and as best pleaseth Thee. Set me where Thou wilt, and deal with me in all things just as Thou wilt. Behold, I am Thy servant, prepared for all things; for I desire not to live unto myself, but unto Thee; and Oh, that I could do it worthily and perfectly! Amen.

— THOMAS A KEMPIS

To me the crux of the spiritual problem of today is to be found in the fascination which psychic life exerts upon the modern man.

— C.G. JUNG



Prayer

by CARMELITA McKEEVER, CSJ

I planned carefully
And arranged a meeting-place
Convenient for each.
Now I must prepare to breach
Unexpected distances.

Emil Nolde 1867-1956

Nolde's art is rooted in the unconscious mind — regions where myth is born in

CHRIST AMONG THE CHILDREN: Painting by Emil Nolde

isper of primeval memories

AT a time in life when most men have made their mark, Emil Nolde — dark, brooding, introspective — was baffled by the calling of his vocation as an artist. The vagaries of trial and error dogged his heel, and he had not even youth, which can outweigh many odds, to balance the scale. Then suddenly that inability to evoke the inner stream of subconscious thought was wrenched out of him by some mystical power. He found "a fire blazing in the bowels of the earth . . . one that influences us mortals."

Thus began, at the age of forty, the career of a man who was possessed by a savage need to embrace life passionately, combined with a fervent desire to express reality. Nolde's art is of the most highly subjective and personal type. He was somehow aware that, hidden behind visible reality, there existed another "mysterious, alluring reality." Few artists have managed to make this hidden reality discernible to the naked eye. Nolde ripped through the veil and uncovered the emotional values which are secreted within the deep recesses of the human psyche. Because Nolde's inner life was ravaged by diametrically opposed values which gnawed at him his ideal man was a perfect balance by being "both natural and civilized, godlike and animal-like, a child and a giant, naive and refined, emotional and rational, passionate and dispassionate, both sparkling life and silent repose."

Imbued with the primeval call of the soil, mythology, an eccentric interpretation of religion, coupled with his extraordinary power to evoke color, Nolde succeeded in marking his works with a mythical resonance and strong thematic religiosity. — J.S.D.G.

An argument for choosing not to flee to extremes

Between Mozart and Left Field

by TOM BAKER

GNOSTICISM is a form of belief characterized by — among other things — a markedly dualistic view of the cosmos. That is to say, the universe is sharply divided between the material (which is inherently corrupt and evil) and the immaterial or spiritual (which is inherently perfect). Those who lean toward the gnostic persuasion tend to deny the value or merit of the visible or material world. They tend to view the body, at least the physical body, as corrupt. And they tend to deny the Biblical concept of man as a psycho-physical unity by opting for the ultimate validity of the transcendent, spiritual domain as apprehended by specially given and received knowledge *(gnosis)*.

One wonders, for instance, if the current fascination with Eastern, or quasi-eastern, religions may not herald the resurgence of Manicheanism, a third century A.D. gnostic, dualistic religion which taught the inherent evil of the empirical, material world and claimed that salvation came only to those who, through special knowledge, were able to release their immortal souls from bondage to the physical world. Manes taught that truth is subjective; that the soul has always been and will always be; that differences (God/man, man/woman) were illusions made necessary by their manifestation in the deceptive realm of the concrete; that knowledge has a unique, transforming power which can ultimately grant the knower (the gnostic) a condition of timeless, spaceless, tensionless bliss. One sees a distinct similarity between this partial list and the list of Eastern thought found on page 29 of the December 1981 issue of *Fellowship In Prayer*. Of course, a far more detailed and annotated comparison could be made, but one hopes this is sufficient for the purpose of this brief essay.

Perhaps the early Christians knew something when they railed against the gnostic "heresies" with which they were so often confronted. Clearly, for instance, the Gospel of John was written by someone thoroughly familiar with gnostic language (*viz.*, the constant repetition of such dualisms as "light/dark", "good/evil", "heaven/hell", etc.), who was seeking to assert the folly of this way of bifurcating reality. It may well be the unique genius of primitive Christianity, as evinced in the four Gospels and the writings of Paul, that it sought to encourage its adherents to live *within the tension* of immanent-transcendent reality.

To be sure, early Christians affirmed the dichotomous nature of reality. Yet they fought against the willy-nilly opting for one extreme or the other. Early Christians affirmed the beauty and validity of *both* the material and the spiritual realms. One can see this clearly in the writings of Paul as he sought to live with "one foot in this world and one foot in the world beyond," giving

equal value to both. Paul's ontology posits the belief that the created, material world which one apprehends through the senses is not an illusion, not a cosmic mistake, not a product of ignorance *(agnosis)*. It also takes seriously the tension between the phenomenal (the concrete "here and now") and the supra-phenomenal (the spiritual, transcendent) which, while not coterminous with it, is neither better nor worse than the phenomenal.

While it is clear that Paul and other early Christians looked for a coming transformation of reality, it is equally clear that the nature of this transformation was something at which they could only guess, using the symbols provided by their Jewish heritage and their contact with the trans-Jewish ideas of Jesus of Nazareth. Put more simply, to be a Christian in the first few centuries A.D. was to live joyously and expectantly with the tension and ambiguity of the material/spiritual cosmos, looking for ways to more fully appreciate and apprehend both realms, to affirm the value and ultimate meaning of both, without opting for one extreme or the other, indeed, to strive toward experiencing the *unity* of these two realms.

It may well be (as has been suggested by Rudolph Bultmann, Albert Schweitzer, and others) that Christianity has never fully recovered from its early contact with the religious dualism of the various gnostic sects and the philosophical dualism of neo-Platonism. Certainly there have been Christian ascetics such as St Teresa, St John of the Cross, and Meister Eckhart who chose to seek the purely spiritual life, condemning the material world as evil. So, too, there have been Christians whose sensuous, hedonistic lives have left little room for the transcendent. Still, a search of Christian literature will reveal that there have always been those content to live — albeit at times most uncomfortably — "within the tension," who have sought to unify the poles into a transforming, both-affirming, "new creation."

Perhaps the truth of falseness of any belief system is determined by the ontological framework from which one operates. This writer is admittedly Western through and through and hence is probably limited from fully understanding the Eastern world-view. Still, he is arrogant enough to believe that, as a Christian, he has the freedom to go beyond the confines of his occidental background, to see the beauty in both the Eastern and Western world views, and to "say the amen" to both the material and the spiritual realms without diving wholly into one to the total exclusion of the other.

This was no easy task in the first century A.D. It is no easier now. Certainly it is tempting to want to flee the material world, for that is where problems are most immediately visible. The ancient call of Manes to respond only to one's own, subjective interpretation of reality is, at times, hard to resist, and the rebirth of interest in Western interpretations of Eastern religions is understandable.

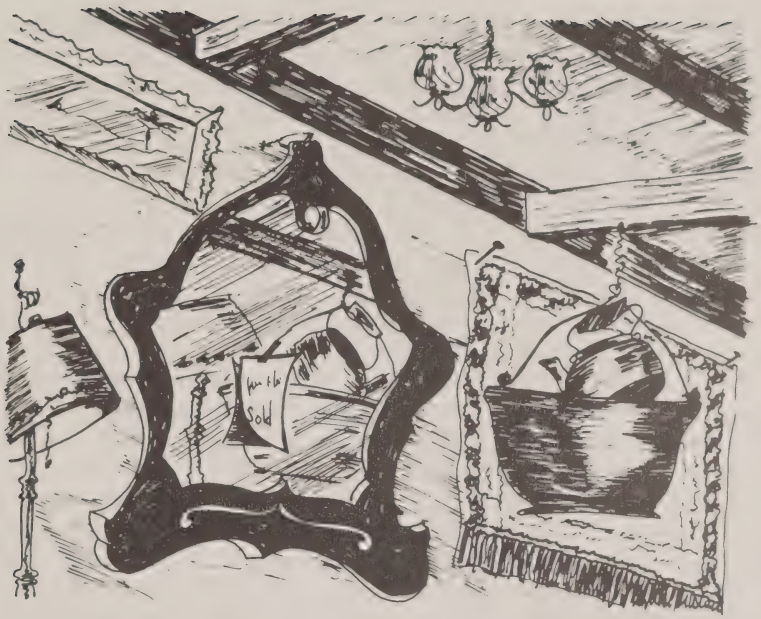
Still, there is something almost courageous about staying in the middle and not fleeing to one extreme or the other. That, at any rate, is where this writer chooses to stay. Somewhere between the sublime, timeless, transcendent beauty of Mozart and the sweaty, material beauty of a gracefully fielded fly ball in left field is "where it's at."

VAN'S SHOP

A Story by ELIZABETH SOCOLOW

ON the glass counter, there is a basket of painted Easter eggs although it is Thanksgiving, not Easter. And there is a box of calling cards which read: VAN BLAKEMAN, CHAMBERS STREET, ON CONSIGNMENT, although the store is probably about to change its name.

There are at least eight of the painstakingly painted Czechoslavakian eggs. Each is different. Some of the traditional geometric patterns are beaded with gold, which is unusual and has caught the attention of the customer who has apparently been called to the shop for this particular egg-sighting. She is elegant and unruffled. She takes her time at the counter, attempting to choose not where but how many and which of the eggs she will buy. It turns out that ever since she



discovered Van's store when it was a single basement room at the corner of Spring and Witherspoon Streets, whenever Van gets any painted Slavic folk eggs in, he calls Mrs Vosse. Five years ago, she was on her way to have her hair cut when she was waylaid by Van's first collection of collectibles. When he moved to Chambers Street in 1977, Mrs Vosse came with him, to browse during her lunch hour or for special egg-viewings.

"In some ways it's like coming to a museum, to get lost in some other time and place." She tells me she works as a secretary nearby. I too happened into the Chambers Street store one lunch hour when I was working as a typist, and saw my grandparents' bed leaning up against a back wall of the shop. My grandparents' bed was made in Brooklyn, vintage 1910, with the footboard that curved around the mattress, the brown clouds of mahogany in the curved headboard. And here was it, or its twin, in New Jersey of 1979, along with odd pieces of carnival glass which were my grandparents' treasures, or at least glass very like the iridescent salmon that greeted me at dawn when I slept as a child once a month on Saturday night on the daybed in their living-room. The linoleum was cold underfoot in winter. The carnival glass and the dawn sky talked to each other with the same swirls of color. I woke from the good nightmares and the good sweet dreams to this conversation between the sky and the three or four pieces of glass, and snuck to the bathroom, and saw, through the open door, my grandparents snuggled in the mahogany double

bed, the curved headboard brown, cloudy, and wide-grained as a lowering storm sky.

Mrs Vosse's eyes are moving up and down while her hands heft almost weightless eggshells. She is scanning the chair I am inadvertently exploring. My hands are running along a protruding set of spindles at the top. That extra harp of wood looks as if it would cause trouble with old-fashioned long hair in a country kitchen, the householder shelling peas and losing hairpins. "It really is a kind of museum," Mrs Vosse says. "That chair she's holding onto, for example, Van. How old is it and what's its name?"

"That's a combback," Van says. "The extra bit at top held shawls. The shawls kept out the draft in winter, let in the breeze in summer. Or the combs did. The shawls got folded up and put away. This one's pretty new. 1920, I'd guess. But the style came in in the late 1800's. Along with Pasteur and germ-theory, I'd guess. Something like that."

"See," says Mrs Vosse, holding two eggs with a green triangular design and striped yellow and black up to the light. "He always knows."

"I don't always know," Van insists. "I always guess. That's different."

IT isn't necessary to focus on the spectacular and few Shakers, their use of wood, octagonal buildings, daily artifacts, and craftsmanship to invoke an American affection for the blessedness that inheres in things. In a country where there is still wilderness, a passion for engagement with it in sport, camping, hiking, and scientific exploration, where memory and documentary can still summon a citiless territory, where immigration and the problems of relocation are still with us, and where arrival in a new place with only portable possessions is a daily occurrence in the corporate world, we know an abiding veneration of houses, shelters, dwellings, and their furnishings. There is a selectivity that comes of mobility and a turnover of rejected goods. One response to too much novelty of home, school, neighborhood is the familiar suburban sameness of housing design. Another response is a fastening on to old things that carry a history and memory of their own. I once counted that in eighteen years of marriage I had moved house a dozen times. Seeing a particular standard headboard from the time of the first world war ran a thread of continuity through all that change.

Antique shops have always depended upon that imaginative leap and human need. All over the western world, stores dealing in antiques represent one of the first forms of recycling resources, both useful and beautiful. But the second-hand shop is something else, a bit more risky, often surprisingly permanent in a community, and akin to the church auction, traveling salesmen, and Aunt Sally's attic. The nature of the merchandise is of less proven value and worth than that of antiques. The stuff in second-hand shops is more transient and more reflective of the movements of people across oceans, states, occupations, and lifestyles. These shops deal in leveling the useful and the useless, the tasteful and the artless, the standard and the idiosyncratic. By way of selection, chance, and need, the customer in choosing becomes an artist. What memory and what artifact will anyone find among the old coins, cheap

perfume bottles, Victorian earrings and settees, paymaster desks and hand-made parquet end-tables, andirons and rusted-out fireplace screens, skirt hangers, ice skates, dollhouse furniture, and linen tablecloths, quilts, rugs, farm implements of obscure use, Mission Oak from time to time, vases always, Italian Provincial reproductions in white veneer? A second-hand shop is like a moving sale of ten families after the most desired items have been taken, or, as a sign recently seen in Vermont announced, it is an INDOOR YARD SALE.

In Van's shop, while I have been observing Mrs Vosse observing the eggs, I notice that leaning against the paymaster's desk, there is an object that looks like an ink roller, the kind I've used when I play at linoleum block printing for holiday cards. That's the shape of the thing, but it is waist high, rests on the floor, the roller mightier than any rolling pin I've ever seen. In fact, it would house half a dozen of the largest rolling pins. Oddly, the framework of the handle is wood, not metal. It consists of a pin through the roller and two side supports and a double handle at the top. It looks as if constant rolling would wear down the wood pin. The implement could have been used to roll the lawn of a miniature formal garden or a grass tennis court. It could be used to mash fruit in a long pen at harvest time. The roller itself is variegated in color, though the oak is smooth, no splinters. It may not be oak — is, perhaps, tulip, light wood clearly.

A large, cheerful woman in a maroon brocade skirt has walked into the store, gone over to the roller, and contributed a stream of observations to the gathering. Van comes out from behind the counter where Mrs Vosse still chooses eggs. He pushes the mysterious roller along the floor. "It looks like fruit stains," the woman in the brocade skirt observes.

Mrs Vosse is deep in the final study of the eggs, the sharp points, dots, lines, triangles of the ornamentation working in counterpoint to the curved form of the egg. Ornament and shape exist in a tension between surface and form, decoration and sculpture, graphic and plastic art that is pleasing and mysterious in its apparent uselessness, as mysterious as the lost function of the wooden object that Van is pushing along the floor. Mrs Vosse's features are carved and delicate, like the painting on the eggs. Her face is almost exactly the tawny color of the handle of the wooden roller.

Above her head some necklaces are hanging from the light fixture. Between the necklaces hang a dozen photographic slides, striated, dotted, and stippled texture on organic forms alongside trees. These slides of trees and enlarged microscopic cross sections of bark, seeds, bolls, and pests of plants come from an old case of botany-teaching photographs. They were used in

(Continued on page 52)

TEENAGERS

Photo essay
by AMY STROMSTEN

So much of youth is an ill-defined dying,
An intolerable waiting,
A longing for another place and time,
Another condition.

(I'M HERE
by Theodore Roethke)

Where youth grows pale and spectre-thin, and dies;
Where but to think is to be full of sorrow
And leaden-eyed despairs.

(ODE TO A NIGHTINGALE
by John Keats)

Youth had never been seen as a separate problem group in American history. "Youth" was accepted as a glandular episode that would, without doubt, be cured by the simple passage of time, when youths became parents and taxpayers in their turn.

(SUMMING UP
by Theodore H. White)

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THE WORKING COUPLE

by LEON GERSTEN

JOE AND ALICE ADAMS, a working couple, arrive at home at the same time. They greet each other warmly, embrace, and exchange accounts of the day. Alice finally asks, "Who's going to prepare supper?"

Joe responds, "I didn't think about that. Would you mind?"

"Of course I would. I assumed you would say yes to that."

"And I assumed you would, I guess."

Alice cuts the edge of anxiety: "We could both use a wife now."

This little scene illustrates one of the primary stresses that working couples are facing as a result of women's career involvement. More and more, as a result of housewives making the transition from domestic to professional status, couples are being forced to reassess their responsibilities to: the home, their children, and each other. The old-fashioned division — that men earn the bread and women care for the home — is being overstepped.

Jerry and Mary Dunn have cleaned up the dinner table and retired to the playroom for some relaxation. As they flick on a program they both enjoy together, one of their children, John Jr., rushes in and pleads for help with his homework. His father glances at his wife: "Mary, will you take care of this matter? I'm just bushed from a day's work."

Mary is resentful. "Why don't you? You're his father. Besides, I've put in a day's work, too. Or have you forgotten?

They bicker while the child stands before them, book in hand, eyes popping with confusion.

The father's expectation of his wife's duty to the son is a residual carry-over from the previous pattern: a man eats, then withdraws to relax, while the wife continues with family chores. Though Mary works fulltime and puts in as many hours as her husband, John has not yet accepted her as an equal. The male perogative of primary right still prevails, as far as John is concerned. He may perform more in the way of chores in the house, but still he expects his wife to meet the needs of the children.

If we can look again at both scenes as evidence of changing patterns in modern-day family life, we can see that new turf has to be mapped out. Domestic responsibility, nurturing, responsiveness to children's demands, and decision-making need reassignment. And the way they are allocated depends largely on the particular couple involved.

The issue, then, is quite clear. If a husband and wife go off together to work in the morning, who will take care of the laundry, the cooking, the shopping, the needs of the children, jobs that have to be done around the house?

Leon and Elayne Gersten called their two children together for a family powwow. They huddled on the floor. Elayne opened the meeting with, "I have something important to tell you. Mommy is starting a job next week, a job

that will keep her away the whole day. I need everyone's help around the house because now Mommy can't do everything she did before."

Julie, the daughter: "I'll straighten things, make the beds, and prepare the dinners."

William, the son: "I'll do the laundry, run errands, and clean up after dinner. I'll even take the garbage out."

Leon, the husband: "I'll volunteer to do the food shopping, set the table, and take care of the monthly bills."

Elayne looked at her family and smiled. They were eager to pitch in to enable her to go to work with minimal anxiety. She smiled in gratitude.

While the above scene may seem ideal, it actually happened in my family. Before resentment could set in, we immediately grappled with the change by being open with the children. The problem was ventilated like any other, and resolutions came from all concerned. My wife's decision to adopt a career was fully accepted as her need to be more than a mother. Acceptance also meant shifting her burdens among us all. We were willing to take on more than we were accustomed to doing, for her sake.

The reluctance of some men to involve themselves in what they consider "feminine" chores, such as cooking, and being intimate with the children, can be an obstacle to a woman's desire to enter the work world. Men who have traditionally said, "I don't want my wife to work" or "I can earn enough money for my family" or "My wife belongs at home with the children" are not easily willing to yield ground. Sometimes it's a matter of domination, fear of losing male supremacy, inability to cope with a changing woman, a desire to keep sex roles as they are. Faced with a wife who wants more out of life than confinement to the home, these men are challenged to make accommodations. How they make them depends, again, on the quality of the relationship and the extent to which they can verbalize internal conflicts.

"I don't want you to work," insists Jerry.

"That's not the point. I don't want to work for the money but for the professional enrichment."

"I still don't understand. I make a good enough salary," insists Jerry.

Jerry is representative of many men who feel threatened when their wives return to work. His self-image is wrapped up in his earning power. He has accepted his role as breadwinner, as sole support of his family. He cannot see the importance of his wife's quest for self-fulfillment, because he views that as competition in what he has accepted as his territory.

Jerry's change comes about ultimately when he realizes how urgent it is for his wife to do more than maintain the home, when he is convinced that she is not vying with him for dominance but seeking her own niche. Through several dialogues on why she needs to take up a career, Jerry begins to view his wife differently. He views her as vital, bright, resourceful. The dull look of a harried housewife is soon replaced by a vibrancy that makes her more appealing. Later, when she brings her first paycheck home, he exclaims, "This money will sure come in handy."

When my wife first expressed an interest in returning to her profession, I

encouraged her to slip back slowly. I did this by returning home early to babysit for the kids and thus allow her to work parttime. Her re-entry was exciting for her, providing the impetus to study for an advanced degree to qualify for fulltime employment. When she returned, I detected dramatic changes. She was alive, she felt that she had contributed in more vital ways, and she felt needed by the outside world. The benefits of this arrangement, for me, were that I was able to spend periods of time with my children and got to know them intimately, they in turn, had the security of knowing a father, and I was able to experience the pains and joys of parenting. When Elayne finally became employed fulltime, we shifted ground to share the responsibilities, I by doing the shopping and cooking, she often servicing the cars and doing the chores around the house.

If both husband and wife are open to change, the new relationship that results when the two work can be exhilarating. There is, for example, a greater closeness and sharing, more mutual respect and admiration, a tender regard for the other's needs, and a pattern of negotiation when new crises arise. They both emerge as stronger people and the marriage is cemented in new ground. Genuine consideration for each other is a by-product.

"I won't be home till late Tuesday evening," Bill explains to his wife. "I have a meeting at the office."

"That's all right, dear. I'll take care of the supper and the kids."

Bill inquires, "Don't you have to stay late Thursday?"

"Yes. Glad you remembered."

"More than remember," Bill says. "I'll take care of the house then, and put the kids to bed as well."

"Thanks."

When this spirit of cooperation happens in a working couple's relationship, progress has no bounds. Between Bill and his wife, there is a genuine regard for each other's commitments that goes beyond lip-service. Each is cognizant of the other and ready to pitch in to make it easier. They can work out problems in an adult, loving way.

But this is not always true when one or the other feels beleaguered by responsibilities that cut in on personal growth and other interests. Husband or wife will react negatively when, for instance, the husband has an exciting career outside of the home while his wife resents the domestic life or when a career woman succeeds in establishing herself while the husband has reached a plateau and no longer finds satisfaction in his job.

It boils down to self-esteem. If both have it — in terms of both home and career — the chances are there will be no hostility or even sabotage. That is why it is imperative that a husband or wife encourage the other to pursue interests outside the home, whether it be job, cultural expansion, or development of a skill. Men who have been working all their lives are in as much need of personal development as women who have been consigned to the domestic role. Ideally, interests pursued together reap greater rewards, but when individually pursued, the benefits are in terms of personal achievement, which always bolsters self-esteem. Without it, one is relegated to an inferior position

in the marriage.

Are there benefits to children when both parents work? Since fathers are expected to earn money for them, children have no problem expecting anything else. But when mothers become employed, the situation has to be dealt with delicately, since young children are conditioned to have Mommy nearby all day. Older children are more accepting of their mother's career choices only after they are led to see that such a decision will make Mommy a fuller, happier person, and when they do not feel denied of her love and care. The process of getting children to accept the need for a mother's fulltime employment rests on openness and sharing.

"But why do you have to work, Mommy?" little Sarah asks.

"I want to work because I think I can help other people besides my family and because I want to be a better mother."

"How will you be a better mother if you work?"

"By feeling satisfied outside I can love you and your brother more," the mother explains.

"But Daddy makes enough money, doesn't he?"

"Yes, he does. But my reasons are different. I don't have to, I just want to."

By exploring feelings, anxieties, and apprehensions on the part of all members of a family, couples can bring to the surface a level of honesty that will eventually help in overcoming resistance. Dialogues must be ongoing, until such a time when real need becomes apparent and compromise voluntary. Children will accept if gently persuaded. My own children were initially resistant when my wife announced her intentions of working fulltime. They were fearful of losing their mother's presence and support. They were also fearful of change and role-shifting. But as soon as they saw that I, their father, would be there as a nurturing parent, that their mother, upon coming home in the evening, was exuberant and patient with them, and that she was becoming a more exciting person to be with, they soon came around to being proud of her. I have often heard them tell their friends, "My mother is not just a housewife, she's also a career woman."

Our society is now undergoing dramatic changes with regard to family life. Of the many shifts in roles, the woman's return to the business or professional world is perhaps the most dramatic. It is by no means an easy transformation for a woman to make, but it can be a wholesome one, not just for her but for her family as well. If approached honestly, it can be a step toward family solidarity.

But it requires cooperation and support on the part of husbands and children. That's where a man can show his greatest love, and children their keenest appreciation.

There are three forms of culture: worldly culture, the mere acquisition of information; religious culture, following rules; and elite culture, self-development. — *Hujwiri, REVELATION OF THE VEILED*

Doorway to Nowhere

by RENEE C. MARTIN

I see this magnificent entrance. . .
steps,
columns,
with only trees and open space beyond.

My imagination runs wild.
— Is there an unseen mansion?
— Is there another world?
Or
— Is there just myself beyond the doorstep?

Unconsciously, intuitively, I know
— wherever I go, there will I be.
Nothing is left behind. All of me will be there.
Only if I choose will there be change.

Only if I choose will my situation change.
Only if I choose will my mind change.
Only if I choose will my attitude change,
thereby changing those around me.

I choose!

VAN'S SHOP *(continued from page 41)*

classrooms at Rutgers to produce the academic version of a church lantern-show. Illuminated by the ceiling light they hang from, they are stark black and white and cast shadows on the hands and faces underneath. Mrs Vosse's hand is the color of cherry wood, smooth and relaxed, after having selected six of the eight colored eggs.

The corpulent newcomer in the brocade skirt keeps pushing the farm implement. She is saying: "Fruit press. It must have been."

Van moves away from her to close the sale with Mrs Vosse. The woman in brocade pushes the roller among an imagined pen filled with imagined peaches. "You can't control it much," she says, while Mrs Vosse pays for her eggs.

"They're for a friend," Mrs Vosse says to my glance. "Someone with everything. You know what I mean. It's good to give her what she really wants, if I can." Her face, like her hand, is transformed.

"Heavy, isn't it?" says the woman in brocade, lifting the roller, just as Mrs Vosse is leaving the store with her feather-weight plastic bag of eggs. The woman in brocade asks Van if he has heard from someone. "Also, I'm looking for a corner chair. And Elsa's quilt? What became of that?"

Leo Arons comes into the larger portion of the store from the smaller collection he displays in the connecting room. He knows about Elsa's quilt. He says someone has taken the quilt home on trial — he never asks anyone to take large objects with that much color and pattern until they have tried them out in the room they are to be used in. "The mind simply cannot imagine infallibly," Leo says, "especially when it comes to color and pattern. It isn't fair — or I don't think it's fair — to sell anyone something in that range and expect them to have perfect recall of color and pattern. It could be a real clash with what's there already, and then the beauty and value are frustration instead." He tells the woman in brocade that he has a corner chair for sale. It has ivory inlay on the back and has been reupholstered in a small-weave brocade that counterpoints the large heavy flowers in her skirt.

We all go to see the corner chair. Its dimensions are particularly pleasing, the angles of the diamond-shaped seat and legs declaring themselves in challenge to the curved arms. It costs six hundred and fifty dollars. The brocade skirt turns sharply from the smaller shop back into Van's larger rooms. "Belongs in a museum with other pricey beauties," she says. She finds a firescreen in the basement of Van's side of the shop for twenty-five dollars. She is pleased, and pleased that Leo Arons has managed her friend's quilt so kindly. As she is leaving with the firescreen, a man with a well-pushed-out somewhat-spotted forest-green jersey shirt, gray hair, and a merry look walks in.

He conveys contained energy by the way his hand rummages through his hair, as if he has forgotten his brother's phone number and will find it by rubbing the magic spot, whose exact location he has also lost. Despite the implicit frenzy and distraction of his hands, he moves gracefully among the end tables, rocking chairs, bureaus, past Van at the counter doing accounts under the ceil-

ing fixture where the botanical slides turn silently.

"Now, that's a dandy bake box," the newcomer says. "I think I'll get this for me grammaw for her birthday." He looks as if he himself is more than fifty. Even without doing the calculation, I know he can't have a living grandmother. But his every gesture is so full of gentle mockery, his feet are those of a ballet clown, his legs those of a dancer, eyes mischievous and sad as Chaplin's and his arms and hands all his own, it is impossible to tell what is true and whether he is tomfooling all the time. He just could have a grandmother, if she was ninety. And if she had his temperament, she could live that long. He is holding a black object with a square handle, a cube beneath, a sliding door on one of the square faces. He opens and closes the door several times. "Works," he mumbles and then looks right at me. "A bake box and a bait box. There's two different kinds of boxes. One for loaves and one for fishes. This here's the first kind — for keeping bread fresh."

I had not asked. I was sitting, looking, I suppose, as blank as possible, as if I were willing to be told anything, as if I'd either believe it or else laugh, as if I wore a sign that said TELL ME the way Alice's bottle said DRINK ME and nothing else.

The round clown in the green shirt continues to tell me things. He does not guess, like Van. He knows. He is carrying his black bake box over toward the wooden roller. "I'll give you fifteen dollars for it," he calls to Van in the shadows.

"Which?" Van asks. "The roller or the box?"

"The box for my granny's birthday. She'll love it, once I get it sanded down and repainted."

"What does the tag say?" Van asks.

"Twenty-one dollars."

"I can give it to you for eighteen, but not fifteen. I've got to get fifty per cent back to my clients. Can't go any lower. It's hurting me too."

"I was hoping you wouldn't say that," says the green shirt. I am sure he has been in the shop before. Perhaps Van has told him that the consignment aspect of the business is not working. More and more Van is buying at estate sales and auctions. He finds that some people think ON CONSIGNMENT spells KEEP OUT, EXCLUSIVE CLUB and that, in any case, given the current economy, he cannot do well enough or move goods fast enough in that

mode. Yard sales, out of doors, handled directly by the sellers, will do better for his clients.

The man with the green shirt is surveying Van, who sits under the botanic slides, drawing on his pipe. The way he smiles and does not finger his mustache when engaged in talk or bargaining, the way he puts down his pipe and gives his attention to the subject at hand, makes him look slightly mock-sinister, up against a potential pratfall. He seems to be someone who once ran cattle, who has sat at tables in isolated truckstops in Utah where there were skirmishes in the back room over drugs. His rugged face and youthfulness suggest that he was an explorer of the 'sixties'. His traffic, however, is furniture. But his hands are those of an aristocrat, fine-fingered, as the cheekbones are high and the libs long. Even so, the hand have held ropes, not only intending cattle, but the lines of ships, the necks and collars of teenage boys, in a reformatory perhaps, firm and in control of toughs. And because they are so fine, you can tell the hands have held wires and pliers and electric cords, have been oiled black by the slough of car engines. The man is poised behind his counter, but not dilatory. He has always kept busy and therefore mostly out of trouble. But that fierce a sense of self must have made school come hard.

This projected biography may be true, false, or somewhere in between. I know I last saw hands like those on a man who drives a buggy in Central Park and builds fireplaces for city people, summers in New York City, and spends winters handling horses in Colorado, where he collects barn tools and rough pioneer antiques to bring back East to make a killing. The man — like some figure in a medieval allegory — was named John Driver. He came out of Brooklyn, from a family or eight children. He all but failed school, he said, because he couldn't stand to be indoors long. By the look of him, I would guess he was ten years Van's senior at the time and had gotten away with school failure a lot easier than Van had later in a more pressured environment somewhere other than Brooklyn. Van looks like a man who has kept busy, but thinking all the while. Such people write. When they have finished the account books, they turn to words.

"This is an idler," green shirt announces. He has sunk to floor level to examine the roller of the mysterious wooden implement leaning on the paymaster's desk. He has decided not to bargain further about the bake box, but has been caught by another opportunity. "I bet you don't have a clue to what it was used for."

"You have me," Van says, stroking his mustache.

Belly-laughter ripples the green jersey. "An idler is not some dude hangs around shops like this, no sir. This here fella did another kind of hanging. Up on them linen conveyor-belts in the old factory rooms. Stabilized the pulley system. At both ends of the long belts, they hung these things to keep the belts moving steady, ballast-like. Idlers they called them because they didn't do any moving a-tall." He pays Van eighteen dollars, then, and disappears with the bake box while he is one up.

Two men in jeans with billowy shirts come into the shop carrying the predatory air that suggests an aversion to browsing. They would trample peo-

ple in the name of time. They could be dealers, pointing at objects, saying the names of things: "Mission Oak." "Maybe." "Paymaster's desk." "Nice, but too small." They are involved in constant dialogue like that, the one with the blue shirt finding things, the other finding flaws. They do not change roles. They ask Van the price of a vase. It is tagged at four dollars, and he says so. They engage Van in conversation about Gustav Stickley, as if they expected him not to know the name. I am the ignorant one and again my face must clearly be emitting the message TELL ME because, as if to me, and to put down the predatory pair, Van tells more about Gustav Stickley than they wanted to know he knows. That he was German-American. That he worked in oak at the end of the last century. That his sense of design was sturdy and of declaratory proportions, almost like sculpture, keen and graceful. That his craft was painstaking and perfectionist. That he signed some of his pieces, and that those are valued in the high thousands. The pair leave.

My eyes have traveled to an old castiron candlestand lamp, and Van pulls a dustcloth out of his pocket, moves toward the lamp, and starts to dust the dull gray metal — bullet gray.

I am still thinking about bullets, what they might be made of, how, when Van moves on to squat on a footrest and tighten the hinges of a Morris chair. He flicks his head in the direction of the heavy, handsome, standing lamp. "Castiron," he says. "Look at the hammer marks. After it was poured and hardened, someone did some handwork with a hammer on it for texture. Everything in this shop, people took time over."

"Now, that's not true," I say with no little protest on the "not." I eye the next room with shelves piled high with ice-trays, shoelaces, pitchers, bookends, cookie tins, clothespins, hangers, postal scales with outdated ounce-costs, soup tureens, and steam irons that, no doubt, do not steam. Van would like to get those shelves out of the way. He is organized, but not yet tidy. Once he showed me a card in his wallet with information about everywhere he has lived and worked, the sizes of clothes and shoes and the birthdates of his family, credit card numbers, zip codes, insurance policy numbers. You can see him caught one night speeding without his driver's license, pulling out his "life card" and realizing he does not have the license, saying something funny so that the cop laughs and lets him go. Such things as statistics Van and people like him keep in order on the smallest possible card. It's a kind of prayer against the surprises that can take over a life lived by temperaments like his. Looked at one way, it has been an itinerant life, a nicely eggshaped life, the elliptical with a double focus. After quitting school, Van worked at electronics, cars, and odd jobs and fixing things.

Now, married to his wife Deb, and with two children, Van is getting more and more into the purchasing end of the business and leaving the store management to others. His vision is swift, changeable, and as broad as ever. That may be because those of us who are drawn to the constant usefulness of useless and mysterious objects spend a long time letting our imaginations do a form of classification and sifting akin to musing, to meditation, to prayer.

Dear Sir:

Thank you very much for the issue on "Artists and their Spiritual Lives" in which you most graciously asked me to appear. I feel that you have captured the meaning of my dancing very well. My husband and friends are also very happy.

There was one slight error in the article which I hope that you will mention, that is, the style of classical dance is "Bharata Natyam" and not "Bharatalaya" style as mentioned. I shall be much obliged if you could do this.

Once again thank you. My husband joins me in sending you our warm greetings.

As I was trying to explain:

He maketh me dance, I dance.
He maketh me speak, I speak.
He maketh me live, I live.
Everything is His Glory, I am but His instrument.

— Sudharani Raghupathy *(Madras, India)*

Dear Sir:

I wish to thank you for "Artists and Their Spiritual Lives." In Sudharani Raghupathy's dancing, in Saul Lambert's paintings, and in George Nakashima's woodworks, all so beautifully photographed by Tom Dunham, I see the visual expression of meditation and prayer by three exceptionally endowed individuals. I hope that in the future you will do another such issue.

— Carrie K. Kain *(Lawrenceville, N.J.)*

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LA FONTAINE *(continued from page 21)*

the minister of finance, was better known for his fall from grace than by the resourcefulness of his successes. Due to the majesty of his position, and the elaborateness of his character, Fouquet had amassed such singular wealth, and accumulated such power that Louis himself was eclipsed. La Fontaine had pleased Fouquet with his verses and as a result managed to receive a stipend and residence at the minister's palatial Vaux-le-Vicomte, a palace which caused Louis' blood to boil in envy. La Fontaine was forever grateful to this minister and lavished praise upon him during those joyous moments that he spent in residence at Vaux-le-Vicomte. Even after Fouquet's fall, La Fontaine continued to praise him. But this was to be expected, since loyalty to friends was also a part of La Fontaine's character.

La Fontaine was possessed of personal attributes not frequently found in the circles through which he travelled. In those circles, pretension was a necessary *specialite* for survival, but La Fontaine proved that simplicity — that rare manifestation — was the passport which gained him access to the most inaccessible places. He was a simple man, and was loved for being so. He was always welcomed for that easy, natural, if somewhat absent-minded disposition. But that simple character was often spell-bound and tongue-tied, not because of a lack of words, but because he feared speaking in the presence of those he was unacquainted with. Always ready to pour his feelings into his verse, he was in the presence of society — a nullity. This tended to shock those who, having read his works, awaited some vast and discursive pronouncement, only to be disappointed by his silence. La Bruyere summed up La Fontaine as: "The man appears leaden, heavy, and stupid; he is not aware of speech, nor of telling tales of what he has seen. Yet when he writes, he allows animals, trees, and stones to speak. It is all elegance. What natural beauty and delicacy are in his works."

In 1661, Fouquet was drawn — as a result of his own vanity — into a plot which led to his arrest, trial, and incarceration for life. Although many interceded on his behalf, none did more than La Fontaine. The *Elegie aux Nymphes de Vaux* is a deliberate attempt to change Louis' judgment on Fouquet. This testimony of verse acts upon us as though it were music. The strings of our hearts are plucked rather than our brains being forced into thought. The rise and fall of the verse soothes us into a mood which promotes the healing of our senses towards the vainglory of Fouquet. La Fontaine continues in the same mode in the *Songe de Vaux*, where he expresses his joy for a friend. Our minds are widened and willed to a width of appreciation and we stand open to receive in slow and stately procession the ideas which La Fontaine administers: the swift justice of a monarch, the significant sadness of a lost friend, and the singular emotion of a broken heart.

The years passed, and by this time La Fontaine had indulged in the hospitality of many friends, accepted the donations of the important, and found the time to create those famous *Fables*. However, if the years passed,

and we wish to take more than a cursory look into his soul, we must scrape acquaintance with yet another person.

Until 1672, La Fontaine found himself under the patronage of the Duc de Bouillon. Succeeding that, he was incorporated into the household of Henriette d'Angleterre, wife of Louis' younger brother Philippe. Familiarly known as *Madame*, Henriette was to disappear through an unfortunate poisoning, which left La Fontaine homeless. The prospects of sweet peace and tranquility had suddenly vanished like mist before the sun.

Providentially, a person of remarkable qualities and renown appeared and whisked La Fontaine into her life, where the quotidian worries of existence were entirely removed.

Madame de La Sabliere

MARGUERITE DE LA SABLIERE was one of those glorious entities which graced Parisian society with her beauty, charm, and intelligence. She was one of the attractions of the *beau monde,* in which, it was said, her abundant qualities overflowed and invested those around her with a glowing radiance. During that period, she had become a planet which entertained a host of satellites, with whose support she produced a universe all its own. It was a salon known for the provocativeness of its thinking, and the inquisitiveness of its intelligence. The greatest names of the century were attracted to it; Moliere, Racine, Corneille, Pellison, La Fare, Bernier — the list is as endless as it is a tribute to the person who brought it into existence. The subjects discussed there were so varied, the interest roused such intense notoriety, that their words like fireworks burst in the sky and came crashing down about their ears. But it was not by the gift of her beauty that she became the focus, but rather by her intelligence and amiable disposition that all this managed to come about. That she was well-bred and instructed in the languages of antiquity was commonplace; for Horace and Virgil bubbled from everyone's lips. But to be a woman who recognized the deviousness of the politician's tactics, the newest scientific discoveries, the palettes which produced the most marvelous paintings, and the pens from which came the finest verses; this was indeed cause for preeminence. So her fame grew, and Louis himself showered her person with golden opinions, and by doing so she reached the pinnacle of success. She was a great celebrity. By the exercise of powers difficult to define — for one had to experience the feeling — one became instantly aware that she was a truly remarkable person, whose reputation as a great hostess was indisputable. And so it continued, unabated; hosts of greater and lesser persons came pell mell to witness the making of history. From the

most glorious to the most intelligent, all eventually crossed her threshold.

There is something remarkable about Jean's and Marguerite's meeting, some strange intermingling was to transpire, and we cannot fail to be enlightened by this encounter. It was not the simple juxtaposition of two beings coming into first contact with each other; but it is rather through them that one sees that the soul of neither man nor woman is subject to the waxing or waning of time, and that even though La Fontaine and La Sabliere are impregnated with the 17th century, their pathos can never be out of date.

THE YEARS had come and the years had gone, some of them tumultous, some of them uneventful, but all in all Jean had suffered little because his character had been blessed by that muse which enabled him to be free and simple. He possessed those beneficent qualities which children have, but which adults are so ready to relinquish with alacrity. He had been subject to the whims of some and the nefarious characteristics of others, yet so far his life had proved to be productive and congenial. By 1672, he had published the first two books of the *Contes,* and had dedicated the first four books of the *Fables* to the Dauphin, Louis' heir presumptive. His character remained unchanged by these successes, but it is through his soul that we begin to understand him. His naivete of spirit comes through to us as a breath of fresh air from that age of complexities.

Friendship bred the unity of Horace and Virgil, and of Pope to Swift, but certainly no century can present the intimacy which reigned among such friends as Boileau, Moliere, Racine and La Fontaine. One evening, Racine and Boileau invited a theologist from the Sorbonne for dinner. Unsolicited from any quarters, he discussed Saint Augustine. The guest's discursiveness plunged La Fontaine into one of his habitual reveries. Becoming aware of his embarassed silence, La Fontaine proceeded to ask the guest, in a most serious vein, whether he believed that Saint Augustine possessed more spirituality than Rabelais. The theologist, taken aback by the extravagance of the question, stared at La Fontaine from head to toe, and in desperation shot out: "Be careful, Monsieur, one of your stockings is on backwards!" Pensive by nature, and predisposed to absent-mindedness, this ephemeral soul gravitated more towards the inhabitants of the animal kingdom, finding that the funeral of an ant provided more worth than correct dress. There had been a time in his younger days when he thought nothing of sitting for long periods of time under some oak, composing his lofty poems. Those were times when he reveled in the company of women of fashion. It was not that those times had passed, nor was it that he had changed, it was simply that his needs had changed. For now in the waning years of his fifth decade, something terrible had happened, something which was too terrible to suffer alone. It was not that *Madame* had been whisked away *sine proviso*. It was the realization that loyalty and friendship attached great weight to themselves, and that the loss of a friend wounded him to the core. He had been born with a nature which demanded that he be left in the custody of his friends. Lacking the ability and commonsense to pro-

cure for himself those buffers which enable a person to absorb the exigencies of life and maintain a steady balance, he simultaneously dreaded any limitations to his freedom and by this was denied the possessiveness and intimacy of marriage. Marriage — that marvelous institution which provides for the flowering of some — was a dire and exacting science for La Fontaine, one to which he could no longer subscribe. However, he did not dwell long on his fate, for he was soon attracted to that celestial being — Marguerite de La Sabliere — who, for the next twenty years, provided him with a refuge and the care he needed.

Marguerite Hessein, as she had been formerly known, was by the time of their encounter, separated *corps et biens*, from the Marquis de la Sabliere. She too had been married, but after fourteen years, an intolerable marriage was ended. For Marguerite this had not been a tragedy but a triumph, by which the glorious blossoming of her personality had arrived at maturity, and the salon which immortalized her came into existence.

Marguerite opened her heart to this impoverished poet, who ruiniously dissipated his father's estate through neglect, and his desparate and indigent condition vanished immediately. The despondency which might have infiltrated his life was nipped in the bud, for their two lives now became an inseparable, single entity. He had reached a haven, not only of tranquility, but one of enduring friendship. And through this friendship with Marguerite he received a domestication which had proved unobtainable to him through marriage. By allowing him to write and talk, by listening to the vast unwinding of his thoughtful meditations, and by understanding them, Marguerite managed to procure for him — like a mother's unceasing devotion — a frame of mind as close to peace on earth as any mortal could aspire to.

After ten years of peaceful productivity, there came about a change which was noticeable. Some unrest which had been lurking in Marguerite now manifested itself. While La Fontaine had been lost in his meditations, caught up in his compositions, Marguerite had been involved in her salon. But suddenly, without warning, she renounced that life. As if struck by some strange call, as if some irresistible power stripped her of her needs for this world, she relinquished all the glitter and friends which had been part of it; her predelection was now tended towards God. And it all began with another man.

The Marquis de La Fare had been a dominant feature in Marguerite's salon. The grace of his carriage was so astonishing, his manners were so exquisite, that he personified all to which that age aspired to. Scion of nobility from the Languedoc, he pursued his hostess with those attributes with which he had been blessed, and before which all were powerless. Her reticence vanished as his passion for her rose. She fell desparately in love with him. For six years they remained together, until, one day, an awful voice seemed to reach out and tell her things which she could not bear to hear. . . . The inevitable had occurred. La Fare had fallen into the arms of another woman, and with his fall, the passion had subsided and a coolness descended upon Marguerite. Now she found herself destitute of that love which had sustained her. The pedestal had crumbled, the pieces were too broken to be mended. No

one, not even La Fontaine grasped the import of the blow.

Within the confines of her mind, a decision was made, one which would supply her with a panacea for the grief and profound distress which rocked her soul. It was her only recourse — and that was to turn her life over to the care of God. This, she felt, would be the palliative to fill the terrible void which had ruined her life. The conversion was immediate, radical, irrevocable. Its effects on La Fontaine were likewise.

La Fontaine had been blessed by many favorable assets, but, like a child, he required the parameters of guidance — the hands of an adult to hold him firmly when all reasonableness flew away. Marguerite had been that guiding force. It was she, no other person, who possessed those marvelous hands which had guided him in the perfectly correct direction. But now those hands were disappearing. For it was the immediacy of humanity's needs — not La Fontaine's — which became the focus of her attention. Madame de La Sabliere exchanged the decorum and ceremony of her circle for unselfish service at the *Hospital des Incurables.* She made a total commitment to pious and charitable works. But La Fontaine, although he remained her guest and friend until her death, was too removed to benefit from her inclination. The time would come, but it was not yet.

Possessed by an ardent desire to pursue his poetry, yet not willing to imitate his *bienfaitrice*, he sought his diversions elsewhere. He attempted to distance himself from the monotonous isolation which crept up from all sides. The Contis and the Vendomes pursued him relentlessly. All wanted him to be part of their lives. He went one way, then another, unaware that he was being surrounded by that portion of society better known for its licentiousness than for its morality. The dreaded inability of his to say no, dragged him into situations which Marguerite would never have allowed. His best friends, those who knew him well, those who were aware of the nobility which permeated his heart, were not dismayed by the waywardness of his itinerary — all souls lose themselves before they are found, and La Fontaine was no exception. No enlightenment could be brought to bear upon him. He stood firmly on the abyss between the loyalty and love of friendship which he had for Marguerite, and the struggle he had against those like Saint Evremond and the Duchesse de Mazarin, who felt that his talents would be better appreciated and remunerated in England away from the increasing piety at Versailles now that Madame de Maintenon was in full control of Louis. Try as he might, he was incapable of a lack of loyalty to the one who had always guided him. He could not be swayed to the shores of Albion. He remained with Marguerite, tolerant of her conversion, the infrequency of her visits, and her failing health.

By the year 1692, that robust health which had carried him through life began to slip. He began to show physical signs of the fatal disease which would eventually carry him off. But there was something else. . . . His life was ebbing slowly, and he became aware of his spiritual needs. But where was Marguerite? Had she slipped into obscurity? No, she had not disappeared, but had been awaiting the opportune moment to approach him with words of succor, such as only converts possess. She and Racine now approached La Fon-

taine with words of proselytization, and found those words well received. Was it because of his weakened condition? Why was it no longer intolerable for him to hear words of salvation? There were no voices which hissed from the abyss. No whispers came haunting him with doom or damnation. There was only the quiet decision of a man who wished to repossess a faith which had been misplaced.

Yet how was La Fontaine to go about finding his lost faith? He need not have concerned himself, for the machinery had already been set in motion by the Abbe of Saint Roch, who had been apprised of La Fontaine's situation by Madame de La Sabliere. Under his direction in the parish was a young vicar, Pouget, who was newly arrived from the Sorbonne, and was as yet untested in the needs of the dying, much less the needs of the famous dying. With Pouget hot beneath his clerical collar and straining at the leash, the Abbe released him and he fell upon La Fontaine with the audacity and exuberance of the newly ordained. Pouget walked away from their first meeting with the marked impression that: "He was a man of great genius, very simple, and blessed with wit and curiosity more often found in children than in adults." Their meetings multiplied and the questions from both camps struck back and forth, with Pouget exhorting the necessity of a confession, La Fontaine's reticence to do so growing less and less.

Finally, on February 12, 1693, with the entire body of the Academie Francaise present for the occasion, he confessed. La Fontaine confessed the waywardness of his ways, and his willingness to aspire himself back into God's fold. He struck out against the *Contes,* only because Pouget convinced him of their lacivious nature, and promised that if God were to grant him any more time on earth, he would compose nothing but the most pious works.

Was it redemption or was it remission? His illness temporarily subsided, and the final journey was postponed. But if he regained his health, it was because it was required to sustain him through a terrible truth which had been kept from him: Marguerite de La Sabliere was dead. The final aspiration of that penitent soul had reached its final conclusion; she died as she had desired, totally submitted to the will of God. The news of her death rocked the very core of his existence. The shocking revelation of her death seemed too great for him to bear. Although long periods had transpired between their visits, Marguerite had continued to exercise a substantial influence on him through their correspondence, and he continued to appreciate those guiding hands. But now they were gone, and he must leave the house in which he had spent so many good years.

On the day he left and closed the door behind him, by chance he encountered Monsieur d'Hervart — a close friend of long standing — who recommended that he stay at his home. La Fontaine replied, "I was just coming." Only a man possessed of a simple and pure heart could have passed such nobility onto such a friend.

For the remaining years of his life, his sole consolation was his work. He wrote. He corresponded. He wrote more. But never again did his pen compose anything of dubious morality. No hint of licentiousness, no label can be

attached to his late works except that they were pure and exalted. For Fenelon would not have placed the *Fables* in the hands of his protege, the Duke of Burgundy, had he suspected that the man who composed them was not filled with the best of intentions. In one of his last letters to Maucrois, La Fontaine wrote: ". . . . to die is nothing, but can you imagine that I shall appear before God, and you know how I have lived." He had no need to concern himself, for not even God would have found the courage to condemn him.

On the day of his death, Racine was present. They spoke of the special moments they had had together; they relived and felt the presence of those who had departed, they spoke of their good fortune and of their faith. And then La Fontaine slipped away.

There is more than one form of immortality which is undoubtedly his, for very few can claim to have escaped the bite of time as remarkably as La Fontaine. Throughout his entire life his faculties worked in harmony and unity to produce the *Fables* which are as alive today as the day they were written. No one tuned the sounds nor modulated the cadence of a sentence more carefully or more exquisitely. The sensuous timing of metre, the absolute succinctness and judicious use of words is still graceful, always simple. Nothing recommends itself more appropriately to our gentle senses than the perfection of his *Fables*, which we may read today with intense enjoyment and complete satisfaction.

EPILOGUE

"La Fontaine is no more! He is no longer with us, and with him has disappeared those jestful poems, those merry laughs, the innocent graces and the sweet Muses. Weep! all you who have received from that celestial heart and mind that which was capable of such elegant poetry, so natural and unaffected. That man is no longer, to whom an ability to provide the negligence of his art so much more preferable than its most polished brilliance . . . ."

So spoke Fenelon. The famous eulogy stands as the finest tribute to the butterfly whose wings had ceased to beat, for La Fontaine had landed on Parnassus forever.

ON HATRED

HATRED is an emotion that no one admits to, many hide from, but few are altogether without. If by using this word we understand it to mean an ardent desire to cause ill-will to someone, dictated by either vengeance or violent dislike, then, I will concede that hatred is not only rare but incompatible with integrity. But if we are able to provide greater latitude to its significance, and allow it to mean isolation from all things which bother us, irrespective of what or whom they are, then there is no commoner coin.

Jealousy is the most ordinary reason to dislike someone. I am not speaking of the jealousy of one rival against another, nor of the ambitions of one person against another who has received that which the other aspired to, nor of one courtesan against another more favored than she. These are all too well-acknowledged reasons to warrant explanation. The type of rivalry in question is founded on reasons of little importance, and even an honest man is defenseless against the effects it produces. A person, for example, is appreciated in society because he is intelligent or he is enjoyed because he is amiable; he is a necessary part, his presence is required, one cannot do without him. It is certain that he will not take lightly to anyone usurping that over which he is quietly exercising empire. It is very rare that two people with the same talent like one another; the feeling which exists between them is not one of indifference; it is hatred founded upon rivalry.

I cannot believe either that two brothers can sustain a mediocre relationship, especially if their proximity allows for frequent encounters. They must love each other very much, or hate one another, and the reason for this is that if their common blood bond and dispositions do not unite them closely, there necessarily arises occasions for jealousy.

The sharpness which all too often infiltrates arguments and the abuse which supplants reason, is testimony of a passing hatred against that person who proves that by having the upper-hand in an argument, is exercising control over you.

If one reflects upon whom we call an agreeable person, one will find that it is often a person who possesses sufficient wit and talent to amuse you, but refrains from displaying too much which would humiliate you. Otherwise you would take a dislike to him, and although willingly label him as intelligent you would refuse to entitle him as agreeable.

Why does one fear to tell one's friends their faults? It must be that we believe that hatred is so common an emotion that it easily supplants love. We fear that in a moment of sincerity, it will take the place of a sincere friendship. One generally hates all those whom we have harmed.

— Benjamin Constant: Le Publiciste
Translation by J.S.D.G.

The opinions expressed in this issue are the authors' and not necessarily those of the editors or of Fellowship in Prayer.

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Suggested BOOKS

Following are some of the books which have been used in the preparation of this issue:

GURDJIEFF:Seeker of the Truth, by Kathleen Speeth and Iris Friedlander. Harper Colophon Books, New York. 1980.

LA FONTAINE: Selected Fables translated by James Michie. The Viking Press, New York. 1979.

EMIL NOLDE: Text by Werner Haftmann. Harry N. Abrams, Inc. New York.

HAVE YOU LOST FAITH IN PRAYER?

by ANN MARIE TUBBS

AS CHILDREN we were taught that the Lord answered every prayer. If we didn't get what we asked for, it was because the answer was "no." But, as we grew older, some of us felt the Lord had turned a deaf ear to us. What had happened? Had He forgotten us?

Maybe the reason we think He isn't answering our prayers is that we just don't understand His language. When we shout inside with anger, He speaks to us with patience. When our spirits scream in fear, He speaks to us in peace. When we cry out to Him, He speaks to us in hope.

With practice and help from Him we learn to recognize His voice. Listen for a moment. Can you hear His voice? Is He trying to tell you something?

CREDITS

Cover, Pp. 15-16, 42-45: Photos by Amy Stromsten
Page 3: The Japan Society, New York, N.Y.
Page 8, 14, 17: Drawing by Hanneke De Neve
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Page 51: Photo by Jeffrey Ellis

Prayer For Help in Praying

LORD, I know not what I ought to ask of Thee; Thou only knowest what I need; Thou lovest me better than I know how to love myself. O Father! give to Thy child that which he himself knows not how to ask. I dare not ask either for crosses or consolations; I simply present myself before Thee, I open my heart to Thee. Behold my needs which I know not myself; see and do according to Thy tender mercy. Smite, or heal; depress me or raise me up; I adore all Thy purposes without knowing them; I am silent; I offer myself in sacrifice; I yield myself to Thee; I would have no other desire than to accomplish Thy will. Teach me to pray. Pray, Thyself, in me.
Amen.

— FRANCOIS FENELON

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